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"Prayer is to religion what
experiment is to science."

PRAYER

By the same author:

La Teologia di Aristotele, Palermo, 1912

Gesù e il Mito di Cristo (Essay in the criticism of methodology), Bari, 1913

La Classificazione delle attività psichiche (trans. from the German of Franz Brentano, with a preface and notes by the translator), Lanciano, 1913

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Le Fonti religiose del Problema del Male, Rome, 1917

Il Problema del Dolore (Outline of a new Theodicy), Rome, 1921

Religione e Paura, Florence, 1917

Realtà e Idealità religiosa, Rome, 1918

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Misteri pagani e Mistero Cristiano, Rome, 1920

Franz Brentano. Notes and Reminiscences with a portrait. Rome, 1921

Ortodossia e Rivoluzione Russia, Florence, 1921

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Il Problema gnoseologico nella storiografia religiosa, Rome, 1923

Il Valore religioso della Vita, Florence, 1924

The Present State of Philosophy in Italy, Los Angeles, 1924

Il Metodo nella Storiografia religiosa, Paris, 1925

La Rivelazione soprannaturale e il dovere di crederla (trans. from the German of Franz Brentano), Chiavari, 1926

Raffaele Lambruschini e le Idee religiose nella Toscana del suo tempo, Rome, 1927

Orientamenti e Problemi della Cultura contemporanea, Rome, 1928

Fra Chiese e Cenacoli, Rome, 1928

I Nuovi Orizzonti della Cultura religiosa, Rome, 1929

PRAYER

By

MARIO PUGLISI

1867–

Translated by

BERNARD M. ALLEN, M. A., LL. D.

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Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

J. MONTGOMERY.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This book on Prayer is the latest important work of the well-known Italian writer, Mario Puglisi. It is the outcome of four courses of lectures which were delivered by him at four of the principal towns of Italy—Florence, Turin, Palermo and Rome. These lectures aroused so much interest that Professor Puglisi was urged to give the world the benefit of his prolonged study and thought upon this important subject. It is hoped that the publication of this translation into English will be of interest to the many thoughtful people in America and in the English-speaking world generally who are seeking after religious truth.

It will be gathered from the list of books which Professor Puglisi has published that he is an acknowledged authority on the philosophy and history of religion. A native of Sicily and tracing his descent from a family which had been distinguished for independence of religious thought, he came, in his youth, under the influence of the German theologian, Brentano, on whose advice he went to Berlin to study philosophy and religion. Brentano had been a fellow student of James Martineau in the German capital and his influence may be traced, in the present volume, in Professor Puglisi's general conception of the religious life and his method of classifying different types of prayer.

After a period of study and writing our author, eight years ago, founded the *Association for Moral and Religious Progress*, through which he now exercises an important influence upon the thought of his countrymen. In particular by means of his journal, *Il Progresso Religioso*, which has a circulation of over nine thousand, and by his contributions to other religious journals, he is spreading through Italy an interest in the teachings of liberal Christianity.

Having been resident in Rome for several winters, I have had many opportunities of watching the progress of the work which Signor Puglisi is carrying on for the broadening of the basis of the religious life of the country and, while engaged in the translation of this book, I have had the advantage of frequent personal discussion with him upon any points of difficulty that arose in rendering his ideas in another language. It has been my endeavor throughout to retain the special characteristics of Italian thought and expression, while at the same time giving to them a form which would make them clear to readers in the English-speaking world.

BERNARD M. ALLEN.

Rome, February, 1929.

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Part I

PROLEGOMENA TO A PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF PRAYER

CHAPTER I

Current Views on the Question of Prayer

(a). *On the Borderland of Metaphysics.* Owing to the effect of centuries of tradition, Western thought, in its speculations on the significance and value of prayer, has constantly insisted on limiting it almost exclusively to its ordinary etymological meaning of "request," and on determining its value solely by its objective results. This latter tendency indeed was, not many years ago, carried to such extremes that it led people to regard prayer solely from the point of view of its therapeutic efficacy. In support of this position various explanations were put forward, some religious, others purely scientific.

It is well known how that section of modern Christianity which is called "Christian Science" practically reduces prayer to a means of healing. The traditional view of the Church has always been that prayer can bestow a blessing on remedies used for the recovery of health and the relief of suffering, but Christian Science repudiates all assistance from medical skill.

An intermediate point of view between Christian Science and the Church is that which considers prayer to be capable of creating a state of mind favorable to healing by producing patience, resignation and that sense of rest and peace which arises from conscious submission to the Divine Will. This point of view is not a religious, but a scientific one. Modern psychotherapy has devoted a great part of its activities to the discovery of the laws through which mental energy acts upon bodily states; and in this field of secular inquiry psychologists have been invited to collaborate, although they are quite aware that the method of religion is different from that of suggestion, inasmuch as the

latter does not concern itself with the truth of what is suggested to the patient.

Lastly there is a fourth solution, which recognizes medical science as included in the divine economy that regulates the scheme of the universe. This solution has the advantage of not resorting to the extreme remedy of Christian Science, which is compelled to deny the real existence of evil and to assign an exaggerated remedial power to enlightened thought.

Whichever of these explanations is adopted, however, the barrier still remains which separates normal human agencies from the results to be achieved by prayer; for prayer, even if regarded only as a means of calling out a latent divine force, seems to presuppose the intervention of a power which eludes our normal human faculties.

Meanwhile, much attention has been given to the question: Does God answer prayer? According to the theologians, both the authority of the Scriptures and the experience of believers who practice the habit of prayer prove that He does. To meet the difficulties which arise from conflicting experiences the following different reasons are given to account for a petition not being granted:

(1) It was not in harmony with the will of God.
(2) It was not in harmony with the mental state of the suppliant.
(3) Its fulfillment would have been contrary to his true welfare.
(4) It would have been unduly prejudicial to the interests of others.
(5) It would have clashed with someone else's reasonable petitions.

From these explanations it may be gathered that prayer, when understood in its etymological sense as a request directed to superior powers to bring about, or it may be, to prevent certain occurrences, requires a statement of the objective results that are to justify it and the way in which it is to be answered.

If we cast a rapid glance at the principal theories that have been advanced by modern apologetics in defense of the objective results of prayer, we soon notice that the great conflict centers round the conception of natural law. In order to avoid this conflict, it is argued that prayer is really no more than a means

of communication between man and God—a means which, in human relationships, finds its analogy in language, writing and gesture. The example of telepathy is often cited. "What is there," it is said, "to prevent a kind of telepathy between the finite and the infinite?" This theory clearly assumes as proved that conception of natural laws which has been expounded with such ability by Emile Boutroux. But when looked at in its concrete aspect, this means of communication often assumes the appearance of a new energy, penetrating from time to time into the natural order of things so as to produce results that differ from the normal.

Another theory that has been advanced, while not denying, as the preceding theory does, the scientific position with regard to the immutability of the laws of nature and the conservation of energy, tries to reconcile this scientific position with divine answer to prayer, maintaining that God has from eternity made provision for such answering and has arranged the cosmic forces in such a way as to give effect to it at the proper moment. This theory would evidently have no need to admit the contingency of natural laws and would not, on the other hand, conflict with the conception put forward by James Martineau,[1] according to which the laws of nature are merely eternal acts of self-limitation. In other words this theory views the immutable order of nature not as a thing apart and to some extent opposed to prayer but as a whole in which prayer itself is included. In the first half of the last century this was the favorite theory of Christian apologetics, but for some years past it has gradually been given up, since it contains the same inherent difficulties as the Calvinistic scheme of Predestination.

A third theory tries to explain the objective results of prayer, not by means of a pre-arrangement in the laws of nature, but by assuming the existence of a certain energy which is released by prayer without any violation of natural laws. One may recall in this connection the phenomena of magnetism, which, while

[1] Cf. *A Study of Religion*, Oxford, 1888, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, London, 1890.

they prevent a body from falling, are yet in only apparent conflict with the universal law of gravitation. But as this theory fits in with an atheistic as well as with a theistic conception of the universe, it does not find favor either with Christian apologists or with theists. It resembles the theosophic conception of prayer and further coincides, in certain points, with the telepathic theory referred to above, being open to the criticism that it places prayer on a level with a magic force. But, as a matter of fact, wherever in contemporary literature the idea of a living God grows feeble, there creeps in, under the guise of prayer, faith in an animistic force, a kind of electrical energy, sublimated and spiritualized.[2]

To return to the metaphysical problem of prayer, Gregor Holtum[3] recently put forward this alternative: Either we must admit that God gives an answer to prayer directly—and in this case we have a miracle—or we must recognize that the structure of natural laws does not preclude exceptions. Fechner and Ulrici[4] had remarked that the circumstances in which events occur are never repeated and it is, therefore, erroneous to assert that events recur through the repetition of the conditions. Ulrici, in fact, put forward the following dilemma: Either there are free energies, or there are constantly changing circumstances which modify events; in either case we find an explanation of change. Without this indefinite and varied possibility of change, history would be nothing but a monotonous repetition of the same events. This conception, it will be seen, widens indefinitely the field for variations in the course of events and in concrete results, which will differ in quality, degree and extent, while remaining immutable in their essential nature.

With all this, however, the question remains substantially unaltered, and, as may be seen, modern investigations into the objective results conclude with a final appeal to faith. Nor are

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[2] Paterson and Russell, *The Power of Prayer*, London, 1920.

[3] Cf. *Die Naturgesetze und das Gebet*, in "*Wissen und Glauben.*" Mergentheim, a.d.T., 1926.

[4] Cf. *Gott und die Natur*, Leipzig, 1875.

we carried any further by the theory of more or less spiritualized energy being released by prayer. This indeed would complicate rather than solve the problem of causes, for, in such a system of contingent laws causes themselves would have to be subject to contingency.

All the elaborate modern investigations, then, about the objective results of prayer may be said to remain on the borderland of the real metaphysical problem—either because prayer involves more than a request or because prayer is something for which no explanation has yet been found.

As soon, however, as we turn to consider prayer from the point of view of the part which it plays in the life of the spirit, its meaning grows wider and richer before our eyes. This is especially seen in those crises when it rises spontaneously from the heart, when the whole soul stretches like a shining arc between the finite and the infinite. Its return to the lives of those who had formerly condemned it is explained by its being on a level that is more enduring and deeper than the fluctuating and superficial one of concrete temporal needs. Those who had rejected prayer as a survival of ancient superstitions and therefore not suited to modern ways were unable to understand how it could, during and after the Great War return so spontaneously to the lips of those who had condemned it and who could not fit it in with their view of the world and of life. On the field of battle prayer was bound to seem to such observers like a logical contradiction and a moral absurdity, yet it was only by way of prayer that the weary soul could realize its return to that haven of peace of which it had dreamed in youth, when innocent of regrets and disillusionments.

At an hour when the terrific hurricane of war had obscured the accustomed visions of ethical standards, had broken down the altars which in the long course of years had been erected to the principles of civilization and progress, had blinded men to the radiant, alluring prospect of an ideal humanity, nurtured on the conquests of scientific knowledge—in such an hour it was only natural that the unquenchable need for sure and de-

cisive affirmations (a need that cried aloud amidst all that was tottering and collapsing) should express itself in emphasis upon an energetic return to the ancestral faith. The moment seemed favorable for organizing meetings in Europe and in America to summon people everywhere to prayer. Where the forces of the great ecclesiastical institutions were insufficient, so-called Leagues of Good Will were formed, which required meditation and reflection at certain hours of the day. Calls to prayer and prayer cycles sprang up everywhere; Prayer Bands and Leagues of Intercession were formed; and even where people did not pray equal anxiety was displayed to find out the meaning and value which prayer might have.

Phenomena such as the conversion of obstinate and hardened unbelievers, the growth in the numbers of mystics and seekers after God, the crowding of empty churches, have been attributed to post-war conditions. Was it a case of weary, disillusioned people grasping at the old faith, as at a sheet anchor, to avoid sinking into the depths of a bottomless whirlpool? It would be a mistake to be sure that this is the explanation; yet search for the answer to the question leads one inevitably to the recognition of a realm for the operation of prayer which is wider than that usually allowed. And it is certainly a sounder way of scientific investigation not to try to ascertain the meaning and value of prayer by basing it on the old schemes furnished by tradition, but to realize the need for appealing directly to experience, calling as witnesses the men and women who actually make a practice of praying and asking them what prayer really is.

Such inquiries have in fact been suggested and questionnaires have been circulated. Their success has not been and could not be decisive, yet we are here on the more solid ground of experience. I need only refer to one of these inquiries which was started soon after the war and elicited no less the 1667 replies[5] sent from all parts of the world (three from Italy) and written by persons who had been born and brought up in widely varying

[5] Cf. Paterson and Russell, *The Power of Prayer*, London, 1920.

religious environments. One cannot, it is true, draw important conclusions from communications coming from so many diverse nationalities and creeds, nor from the reasons adduced by some for not taking part in the inquiry. But one does gain a fairly clear idea of the position occupied by prayer in contemporary life and thought—a position which, starting from the new need for a synthesis of religious views and for an enrichment of the ordinary scheme of Christian thought (whether by means of the assimilation of elements furnished by the history of Christianity itself or by those of oriental religions, philosophy, science and mysticism) insures for us a fuller and truer view of the function of prayer and points the way to an interpretation very different from that which was assigned to it either within the usual limitations of religious thought or in the superficial denial of religious values.

Another notable feature which emerges from this inquiry, and also from a recent collection of essays on the nature problems and value of prayer,[6] is the fruitful combination of the strongest personal convictions with a wide spirit of tolerance and charity —a fact that enables us to trace the sense of prayer to a common store of religious feeling. Here we find the first suggestions which help us to focus our new inquiries on the mystery of the man at prayer, eternally athirst for the Divine and eternally filled with the ineffable joy with which prayer floods his soul.

(b). *Prayer in History, Science, Psychology and Religious Philosophy.* The closer examination that we have made of the special part played by prayer in the life of the spirit has enabled us to see more clearly the inadequacy of limiting it to its etymological meaning and the value of its objective results, and has given ground for hope that our investigations may unfold to us its new significance and the value that it acquires in the modern conception of reality. This does not mean that we have got rid of the old haunting problem of metaphysics. That is only postponed. For as we proceed in inquiry from the simpler to the

[6] *Concerning Prayer*, London, 1918.

more complex phenomena, from the direct or near at hand to the indirect or distant, the problem of the objective results of prayer, which we met originally at the starting point, now confronts us at the goal.

Prayer has been studied under four main aspects:

(1) The historical aspect, which describes it in its empirical manifestations, within the limits of each religion.
(2) The comparative aspect, which considers it not, like the historical aspect, in some particular epoch or environment, but surveys the different forms under which it appears in all the historical religions.
(3) The psychological aspect, which aims at tracing its inner source and its outward expression within the domain of the religious consciousness of the individual and the community.
(4) The philosophical aspect, which seeks to ascertain its meaning and its value, while assigning to it its proper place in a reasoned interpretation of the world and of human life, and which may therefore be said to sum up in itself all the preceding aspects.

The historical study of prayer in particular religions aims at describing the ideas and the practices to which prayer gives rise within the bounds of a religious institution. This task is much more difficult than would appear at first sight and is bound to be incomplete. For the documents which have been preserved and which are the indispensable material of history contain only such prayers as were included in the forms of religious services drawn up by particular institutions. But it is clear that history in this way loses sight of that rich source of prayer that may be called unofficial prayer, which is spontaneous and is the truest prayer of all, being dictated by the soul of the suppliant. Such prayer is not found in any of the documents.

At the same time there are several important monographs on prayer in particular religions. We have some on prayer among

the Eastern peoples, the Greeks and the Romans. The remarkable progress that has been made in recent years in archeological and philological studies has from time to time opened up new and most interesting vistas for our knowledge about prayer in Ancient Egypt, in Babylonia and Assyria, in Vedism and Buddhism, as well as in Zoroastrianism and Hinduism.[7] Prayer in the Jewish and Mohammedan religions[8] has also been an object of close study. Although Christianity has been called more than once the religion of prayer (e.g. by Bousset and Heiler among recent writers), yet the study of Christian prayer still remains, as Heiler himself has recognized, behind that of Greek or Jewish prayer.

Prayer in the New Testament, the prayer of Jesus, of Paul, of the early dawnings of primitive Christianity, has indeed been examined—sometimes with acute psychological insight. Certain recent publications on special objects of worship[9] have also made some contribution to the history of Christian prayer. Few, however, have occupied themselves, from a historical point of view, with mystical prayer in Christianity. Recently the attempt which has so often been made to give a complete history of Christian prayer has been renewed by two learned and scholarly workers, Fr. Heiler and R. Will;[10] but it can hardly be said that the attempt has so far been completely successful.

When we pass from the history to the science of religion, we find that the investigations into prayer enter upon a new phase. This is seen especially in the noteworthy fact that, when the prayers of different religions are placed side by side, the great similarities which they present at once lead us to recognize a fundamental unity amid the various forms of this characteristic of religious life.

One of the first to develop this line of injuiry was C. Mein-

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[7] Cf. the Bibliographical Appendix at the end of the book.
[8] Idem.
[9] Cf. Karl Richstatter, *Die Herz-Jesu—Verehrung des Deutschen Mittelaters*, Munich, 1924.
[10] Cf. Fr. Heiler, *Das Gebet*, Munich, 1920; Robert Will, *Le Culte*, Strasbourg, 1925.

ers,[11] a writer who is now almost forgotten. The bringing together of the histories of various religions which we have in the most familiar handbooks[12] is limited, it is true to a simple historical exposition of individual religious facts. These works seldom proceed to true and strict comparisons, still less to conclusions which are outside the narrow field of history, philology and archeology, yet for many reasons they are indispensable not only for an adequate view of prayer in its historical aspect but also for making comparisons between different cults. Obviously the increasing accumulation of testimony, coming sometimes from quarters far removed from each other both geographically and ethnographically, could not but lead men to ask what was the reason for such resemblances.

Various methods have been adopted for explaining them. Some have thought that the surprising regularity in the recurrence of beliefs and cults implied that all religions were derived from a single source and that the different peoples, even after thousands of years of separation, preserved intact an original nucleus of common myths and rites.

But this hypothesis, so dear to the traditionalists who uphold the old orthodoxies, must for many reasons be regarded as untenable. It is, for instance, not consistent with the fact that myths and rites recur with greater frequency and persistency in the early ages before civilization arose, at the very time, that is, when tradition, which according to the hypothesis was so assid-

[11] Cf. *Allgemeine Kritische Geschichte der Religionen*, Hanover, 1806-7. K. Beth, *Einführung in die vergleichende Religionsgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1920; A. Reville, *Prolégomènes de l'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1881; E. Burnouf. *La Science des Religions*, Paris, 1885; M. Müller, trans. G. Nerucci, *Quattro Letture d'Introduzione alla Scienza delle Religioni*, Florence, 1874; E. Lehmann. *Erscheinungs-und Ideenwelt der Religion*, in "*Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*" by Bertholet and Lehmann, Tübingen, 1925.

[12] We possess some good handbooks of the history of religions. Only three need be mentioned—

Chantepie de la Chaussaye (rewritten recently under the direction of two distinguished historians, A. Bertholet and E. Lehmann), *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, Tübingen, 1925; G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, 1919; N. Turchi, *Storia delle Religioni*, Turin, 1922.

One might add also the handbook of S. Reinach, *Orpheus*, Paris, 1909, but his judgment is not always quite sound.

uously preserved in men's memories, had not yet taken hold upon mankind.

Another explanation is based upon chance contacts which are supposed to have been made in different times and places and and to have determined the great religious syntheses which were afterwards spread through the civilized world. This theory certainly finds some strong corroboration in history. It receives confirmation in the story of the religions of Greece and Rome and the story of Hinduism, as well as that of Judaism and Christianity. But this theory of religious syntheses, though it is a key that will unlock some doors, does not serve for all. When there is no proof that the peoples concerned have ever had any spiritual contact it is a fruitless task to attempt, as some have done, to explain similarities in creed and cult by means of an imagined synthesis. Nor can it be claimed that the resemblances are of themselves sufficient to prove the actual occurrence of such contact, without falling into a *petitio principii* which assumes as proved the very thing that requires proof.

Yet another theory has arisen. Turning aside from those divergences among nationalities which seem to reflect very old and almost mythical separations of peoples, and also from those correspondences and syntheses which have been brought about by the accidental or intentional meeting of different streams of culture, this third hypothesis dispenses with the need of any spiritual contact either original or subsequent. It is the hypothesis of a parallel process of culture, brought about by an identity of internal motives and of psychological causes instead of by fortuitous meetings or separations of peoples or cultures. It involves the recognition of a kind of psychological mechanism in accordance with which men would constantly tend to interpret certain phenomena on the same lines, to give corresponding answers to questions which all men raise about prime causes and ultimate ends, to react in a similar manner to external impressions, thus creating everywhere, by spontaneous and parallel action, similar systems of beliefs and of cults or ritual practices.[13]

[13] Cf. R. Otto, *Das Gesetz der Parallelen in der Religionsgeschichte*, in *"Vischnu Nàràyana,"* Jena, 1913.

This was clearly a direct appeal to the psychological basis of the religious consciousness, to the fundamental unity of the human spirit, to the generic character of prayer as seen not through its specific manifestations but at its originating source. It simplified the explanation of the fact that prayer had everywhere formed, both in primitive civilizations which were ignorant of metaphysical notions and in those which were richer in elaborate philosophical speculations, the central act of worship, the crowning glory of human religion and of religious institutions. Psychological inquiry, in fact, serves not only to explain how it is that prayer is a universal phenomenon in the history of religion, but also to show us why the religious man has at all times and in all places sought in prayer the highest consecration of life's most critical moments.

It is now clear that the universality of the historical fact of prayer, and of the particular emotion that determines its specific manifestations in time and place, cannot depend except in a secondary degree upon external circumstances. It comes rather from the deep inner needs of the spirit, which it is the task of psychology to analyze and of philosophy to embrace in a comprehensive vision of the world and of life.

This significant appeal to the psychological basis of the religious consciousness need not in any way exclude, as it has sometimes been thought to do, the explanation of resemblances on the theory of similarity or difference of cultures. Rather should it include such explanations. The comparative method had, it is true, often abused its power[14] in its investigation of the origin and development of religions as well as of their lineal descent (witness the theory of Pan-Babylonianism) or in the discovery of a supposed nucleus common to all religions (e.g. Euhemerism, myths of the astral type, the theory of ancestor worship, contrast between the creative or active principle and the feminine or passive principle, personification of the forces of nature, etc.). But even in its obsession for reducing, by the simple process of external comparison, all the manifold differences to a

[14] Cf. Maurice Vernes, *L'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1887.

single basic foundation, it had the effect, quite unconsciously, of bringing into prominence the universality of the essential facts of religion. Meanwhile the results achieved through investigating the history of particular religions, which had opened up the field for comparative studies, were reënforced by the no less surprising results attained in other sciences. Anthropology had penetrated to the remotest prehistoric times while ethnology had brought to light beliefs and cults of inferior civilizations. The store of documentary evidence on which the comparative theory relies for its completest justification was thus enormously enriched, and the way was opened for the discovery of principles and laws which govern the rise and development, the decline and progress of religion.

Such an achievement could not be expected from a purely historical method and would not be possible within the limits of simple historical facts. It could come only from a science which derived its data from anthropology, ethnology, archeology, sociology and philology, and which out of these materials formed a special system of knowledge.[15] "The science of religion," says a recent writer, J. Wach,[16] "comprises and explains religions in their rise, growth and decline; it explains them historically because it cannot dispense with history, but it goes beyond it and completes it." One may add, to make the point clearer, that the science of religion is not a summing up of the history of individual religions, but a description of religious facts, quite apart from those considerations of time and place

[15] Cf. N. Turchi, *Dei metodi storico ed etnologico nello studio della storia delle religioni*, where he also makes appeal to psychology, in *"Saggi di Storia delle Religioni,"* Foligno, 1924; G. Van der Leeuw, *Einführung in die Phenomenologie der Religion*, München, 1925; M. Wernes, *Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1887; G. Wobbermin, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Methode in Religionswissenschaft und Theologie*, Leipzig, 1913; H. Jordan, *Comparative Religion*, Edinburgh, 1910; U. W. Hunzinger, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Methode*, Lichterfelde, Berlin, 1909; J. E. Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, London; R. Pettazzoni, *Svolgimemento e carattere della Storia delle Religioni*, Bari, 1924; K. Beth, *Einführung in die vergleichende Religionsgeschichte*. An excellent book is that by J. Wach, *Religionswissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1924. It contains a very rich store of material on this subject.

[16] J. Wach, *Religionswissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1924.

which are indispensable for history. In this way religious studies have gradually come to prepare the ground for psychology, which, being now in possession of a vast collection of documents, has become the fundamental science for dealing with the facts of religion.

In psychological investigations the resemblances and analogies that are observed are no longer considered in their external relations, to which the historian's investigations are limited, but in regard to the special motives, the emotions and the mental processes which distinguish them from those that are not religious. Thus, while the history and science of religion stops short at describing beliefs, customs, songs and sacred dances, worship of the dead, theogonies, cosmogonies, sacrifices and prayers, classifying them in respect of their external characteristics and external relations, psychology on the other hand goes farther It tries to trace the origin of these religious expressions in the inner depths of the spirit, and ends by finding in them not a common mold, an outward appearance which enables them to be grasped as empirical facts, but that common characteristic, that common sentiment, which is an essential element in the growth of myths, legends, cosmogonies, theologies and also of the social standards to which they give rise and of the forms of worship. For example, it has been possible successively to attempt, in the *Rigveda* and still more in the *Atharvaveda*, in the Brahminic literature and even in the Jewish sacerdotal law, to distinguish those superficial explanations which endeavored to disguise and enclose in a single system the popular beliefs and the animistic practices attached to them; and it has also been possible successfully to detect and differentiate the magic, the tabus, the totems and other popular beliefs and superstitions which are contained in the framework of the great historical religions.

It is clear that one could never have relied upon the mere external observation and description of facts for making these discoveries and for differentiating the emotions that are strictly religious from those that are not.

In the examples to which we have referred above we have,

as anyone may observe, been dealing with two different kinds of phenomena, which have to be examined from two points of view. For this purpose psychological studies are divided into two main branches—one devoted to the religion of the individual (mystic), the other to that of the community (religious sociology) as expressed in the common beliefs, practices and institutions as well as in collective worship.

Among the psychologists who have dealt with prayer in this latter aspect is W. Wundt, who has brought to bear on it all the force of his somewhat diffuse erudition.[17] But he has been able to keep clear of a naturalistic bias toward the framing of an evolutionary theory under which prayer is represented as passing through the successive stages of exorcism, petition, thanksgiving, repentance, praise. No doubt logically such a sequence may be quite appropriate, since, for example, praise is usually preceded by recognition of worth just as thanksgiving is preceded by petition. But as a matter of fact such stages of progress are not found in history, nor are they confirmed by psychological analysis, which shows what insurmountable differences separate exorcism from prayer. This bias toward a theory of evolution which simply leads to the absurd position of deducing a religious act like prayer from an act which is not religious, is a defect which vitiates practically the whole field of contemporary religious sociology.

Writers on the religion of the individual have in their turn sometimes gone astray by paying too much attention to pathological cases and thus trying to limit religious psychology to the field of religious pathology. This error arose from their initial conception of religious psychology as being merely a branch of psychopathology, a conception which was bound to result in reducing prayer to a more or less conspicuous expression of the morbid consciousness. Quite recently the characteristic mistake has been made of applying psychoanalysis to religion with emphasis on its pathological and sexual aspects. These writers con-

[17] Cf. *Völkerpsychologie: Mythus und Religion*, Leipzig, 1909.

centrate their view on one-sided interpretations of primitive phallic elements in religion and perceive nothing in prayer but an outlet for sexual excitement, the rational product of an original sexual perversion.[18]

The psychology of religion, however, ought never to have lost sight of the wide range of reality which, while it embraces pathological cases, is not bound up in them. Nor ought it, on the other hand, to have fallen into airy speculations without an adequate analysis of the documentary material or to have proceeded to a more or less chaotic collection and classification of this material without having duly appraised it.[19] And perhaps this is the principal merit of psychoanalysis, since it is by its method of general discrimination of motives that we can best penetrate the mystery of the particular emotion of the man at prayer.

The main difficulty which besets the experimental method, when applied to the psychological study of prayer, is that the subjects, being under the influence of a special environment and in an artificially produced state of mind, cannot be regarded as reliable witnesses. K. Girgensohn[20] was well aware of the difficulty and did not ignore the criticism which Wundt himself made of the method. Certainly a psychological laboratory cannot afford the same subtle inducements to prayer as a church.

In order to get rid of the difficulties which arise from these artificial experiences they have been compared with experiences that are spontaneous. In fact Girgensohn has himself checked his results by reference to the confessions of the mystics as well as those of St. Augustine and the diary of Wichern.

In cases where there is no opportunity of using as a control some religious fact taken from real life and where the validity of some favorite theory is at stake, the conclusions of the ex-

[18] Cf. W. S. Swisher, *Religion and the New Psychology*; and E. Schroeder, in "American Journal of Psychology," Vol. VI; both cited by W. B. Selbie, *The Psychology of Religion*, Oxford, 1924, who confutes them.

[19] Cf. Oskar Pfister, *Die Aufgabe der Wissenschaft vom Christlichen Glauben in der Gegenwart*, Göttingen, 1923.

[20] *Der Seelische Aufbau des religiösen Erlebens*, Leipzig, 1921.

perimentalist must be accepted with great reserve, as for instance when A. Canesi, at the close of some preliminary experiments in prayer,[21] denied that the emotional side of man's nature came into play, at any rate in the early stage. And yet prayer, if it is anything but an empty name, is steeped in religious emotion. This author admits that trust is an essential factor in prayer; but is not trust an aspect of the life of emotion?

Generally speaking, all the intellectualist tendencies in the field of experimental psychology are continually striving to locate prayer in the interplay of imagination and knowledge, assuming as they do that it arises either from one of these elements or from both in combination.

But on the other hand to limit oneself to describing man at prayer in the processes of aspiration, of struggle, of abandonment or cessation of struggle, in his soliloquies and his colloquies, as J. Segond,[2] for instance, has done, is not sufficient to give us an insight into the nature and purposes of these processes.

It is no doubt well to disassociate prayer from its special historical and temporary content; but it is certainly carrying this too far when the historical and temporary content is taken to include that nucleus of beliefs which is an indispensable element of prayer as of every other religious process.

And just as in the field of individual emotions men have tried to disassociate from them the particular thought process with which they are indissolubly linked, so too in the wider

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[21] Cf. *Ricerche preliminari su la psicologia della preghiera*, in *"Contributi del Laboratorio di psicologia e biologia dell' Universita Cattolica di Milano,"* 1926. Cf. also E. Raitz von Frentz, *Das Religiöse Erlebnis in psychologischen Laboratorium*, in *"Stimmen der Zeit,"* Vol. 109, 1925.

[22] Cf. *La Prière*, Paris, 1926, also what is written about this book in *"Bilychnis,"* Vol. XXVII, p. 230; cf. also B. Pratt, *The Psychology of Religious Belief*, New York, 1907; W. B. Selbie, *The Psychology of Religion*, Oxford, 1924; K. Oesterreich, *Einführung in die Religionspsychologie*, Berlin, 1917; R. Ostermann, *Contribution à l' étude expérimental de la prière Chrétienne*, Genf, 1907; J. H. Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion*, 1912; *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, Paris, 1925; R. Müller-Freienfels, *Psychologie der Religion*, Berlin, 1920; A. Beyer, *Religion und Suggestion*, Halle, 1922; W. Gruehn, *Religionspsychologie*, Breslau, 1926.

field of sociology there has been an attempt to suppress all individual initiative and to transfer the sources of every kind of manifestation of the spirit to the impersonal region of the community.

Exaggerated conceptions such as these must be avoided by observing the true relations of the individual and of the community respectively in the origin of great religious institutions such as the Church, the priesthood, sacred writing and liturgy, holy days and dances, sacrifices and prayers, and also their relations with each other in the life of institutions and of religious practices in general.

An important contribution to the psychology of communal religion has been made by certain ethnographical researches, which have enabled us to gain a better idea not only of the external relations between the great historical religions and the survivals of old popular beliefs and customs, but also of what may be termed the internal relations between the so-called spirit of the community and the individual spirit. In this way some points, which were at first imperfectly understood,[23] have to-day become intelligible in the light of popular practices and beliefs. Able investigators, such as Usener,[24] Dieterich,[25] and Rohde,[26] by making comparisons between popular beliefs and beliefs of extinct religions (Rohde has made effective use of them to illustrate the ideas which the Greeks had about the soul), have offered invaluable material for the psychology of religion. Who does not know the work, in many respects so excellent, of J. G. Frazer? Recently E. Johanssen has by this method obtained fresh light upon the ancient cult of Mithras

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[23] N. Turchi appropriately refers to the inhibitions laid upon the Flamen Dialis as paralleled by the wizard kings of primitive societies in *"Saggi di Storia delle Religioni,"* Foligno, 1924.

[24] Cf. H. Usener, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, *Kleine Schriften* (IV Bd.); *Arbeiten zur Religionsgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1913.

[25] Cf. A. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*, Leipzig, 1913; E. Clod, *Fiabe e Filosofia primitiva* trans. Nobili, Torino, 1906.

[26] Cf. Erwin Rohde, *Psyche, Seelenkult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, Tübingen, 1907, Italian translation by Oberdorfer & Codignola Bari Laterza.

from the Mandwa cult of the Nyaruanda.[27] This literature, which is being rapidly enriched, will reap still further harvests in the field of mythology, popular and legendary epics, cults, rites and liturgies of primitive peoples as men come to understand better the process of the formation and development of ecclesiastical doctrines, exegetics, homiletics, apologetics, dogma and ethics.[28] In the light of these investigations the surprising resemblances between Christianity and Buddhism,[29] between Babylonian, Jewish and Persian beliefs, between pagan mysteries and the Christian Mystery,[30] between the sacraments and prayers of various religions[31] acquire a new meaning springing from the spirit of the masses. The same can be said of the great resemblances between the codes of morality of different peoples,[32] between the fundamental concepts of the invisible world, crematomorphism, theriomorphism and anthropomorphism, since they are everywhere inspired and shaped by the same collective spirit.[33]

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[27] Cf. *Mysterien eines Bantu-Volkes*, Leipzig, 1925.

[28] Cf. J. G. Frazer, *Le Folklore dans l' Ancien Testament*, trans. E. Andra, Paris, 1924; F. Saintyves, *Essais de Folklore Biblique*; *Magie, Mythes et Miracles dans l' Ancien et le Nouveau Testament*, Paris, 1923.

[29] Cf. J. E. Carpenter, *Buddhism and Christianity*, London, 1923.

[30] Cf. A. Loisy, *Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétien*, Paris, 1919. M. Puglisi, *Misterie pagani e Mistero cristiano*, Rome, 1920.

[31] Preserved Smith, *A Short History of Christian Theophagy*, London, 1922.

[32] Cf. L. Lanessan, *La Morale des Religions*, Paris, 1905; E. Benamozegh, *Morale Juive et Morale Chrétienne*, Firenze, 1925; Westermarck, *Ursprung und Entwicklung der Moralbegriffe*, 1908; W. E. H. Lecky, *The History of European Morals*, London, 1904; especially Franz Brentano, *Vom Ursprung Sittlicher Erkenntnis*, Leipzig, 1921, and James Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Oxford, 1885.

[33] Cf. L. Marillier, *Evolution du Sacrifice et de la Prière*; F. D. Jevons, *L'Idea di Dio nelle religioni primitive*, trad. Pestalozza, Milano, 1914; L. R. Farnell in one of his works deals also with prayer in the evolution of religion; M. Müller, *On Ancient Prayer*, Berlin, 1897, considers ancient prayer in ethical, national and individual religion, Cf. also E. B. Tylor, *La Civilisation Primitive*, trade. Brunet, Paris, 1876; Brington, *Religion of Primitive Peoples*, 1897; G. Ragusa-Moletti, *Poesie dei popoli selvaggi o poco civili*, Palermo, 1897; G. van der Leeuw, *Einführung in die Phämenologie der Religion*, München, F. Graebner, *Das Weltbild des Primitiven*, München, 1924; G. Schmidt, *L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu*, Paris, 1910; N. Söderblom, *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, Leipzig, 1916; U. Fracassini, *La religione dei primitivi e l'Idea di Dio*, Fir-

But here we are faced with the latest obligation of religious psychology—not to allow ourselves to lose sight of those individual characteristics which give a personal value to beliefs and actions and not to let the activity of the individual merge or disappear in that of the community. There is always a gap which cannot be bridged between individual and individual, between the individual and the community and even between community and community; and it is this which forms, as it were, the individuality of different communities. Rudolf Otto has pertinently remarked that likenesses, analogies and homologies must not be confused with identity. He maintains accordingly that while the doctrines of *Isvara*, or *Bakti* and *Prapatti* are alike and almost coincide, they are never identical. Similarly it will be found that pagan mysteries approximate to the Christian mystery but are not the same thing.[34] The same may be said of the revelations of the human reactions to good and bad spirits; of the conceptions of the other world; of the idea of redemption;[35] of the origin of sacred writings; of the conflicts between revelation and reason; of the origin of the priesthood,

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enze, 1921; Goblet d'Alviella, *L'Idée de Dieu d'après l'Anthropologie et l'Historie*, Bruxelles, 1892; Raffaele Pettazzoni, *Dio, formazione e sviluppo del Monoteismo nella Storia delle Religioni*, Roma, 1922; G. P. Tiele, *Einleitung in die Religionswissenschaft*, trad. G. Gehrich, Gotha, 1901; A. Lefèvre, *La Religion*, Paris, 1892; C. Schaarschmidt, *Die Religion, Einführung in ihre Entwicklungsgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1907; M. P. Nilsson, *Primitive Religion*, Tübingen, 1911; F. B. Jevons, *An Introduction to the History of Religion*, London, 1904; E. Lehmann, *Die Anfänge der Religion und die Religion der primitiven Völker*, Leipzig, 1906; J. Köstlin, *Der Ursprung der Religion in Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, Gotha, 1890; G. Foot Moore, *Birth and Growth of Religion*, 1923; R. Kreglinger, *La mentalité primitive et la signification première des rites*, in *Actes du Congrès International d'historie des religions*, Paris, 1925; P. Ankermann, *Die Religion der Naturvölker*, in *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, von Bertholet und Lehmann, Tübingen, 1925; Th. Achelis, *Die sogenanter Naturvölker*, in *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, von Chantepie De La Saussaye, Tübingen, 1905; A. M. Fairbairn, *The Idea of God—Its Genesis and Development*, in *Studies in The Philosophy of Religion and History*, Edinburgh, 1876, Kurt Breysig, *Die Entstehung des Gottesgedankens und der Heilbringer*, Berlin, 1905.

[34] Cf. M. Puglisi, *Misteri pagani e Mistero cristiano*, Rome, 1920. R. Otto, *Vischnu—Nàràyana*, Jena, 1923.

[35] C. H. W. Schomerus, *Indische Erlösungslehren, Ihre Bedentung für das Verständnis des Christentums und für die Missionspredigt*, Leipzig, 1919.

sacred places and worship—all of which offer everywhere great resemblances but nowhere are found exactly identical.

Psychology then is faced with a double task—that of bringing out the fundamental unity of religious facts, and that of indicating the unmistakable differences which they present not only within the limits of individual personalities but also within those of communities. Only thus can it grasp the initial phase of prayer and from its inner springs follow and describe its various manifestations and orientations.

But it is just at this point that the philosophical problem of prayer arises. For psychology is debarred from penetrating further and from discovering the meaning and value of prayer, behind the particular empirical conditions in which it is born and lives. In order to accomplish this task, the philosophy of religion has usually taken three different lines, which may be briefly summarized as (1) a defense of the traditional tenets of orthodoxy, (2) a denial of orthodoxy, (3) a diminution or depreciation of religious values. It is a remarkable fact that if one looks for a philosophical investigation devoted specially to metaphysical valuation of religious experience considered in itself, and not with reference to the meanings derived from its outward manifestations as determined by its special environment, one looks in vain.[36]

[36] I may mention here some works on the philosophy of religion for the benefit of those readers who would like to go more deeply into the position which I adopt in the succeeding pages of this first chapter.

O. Pfleiderer, *Geschichte der Religionsphilosophie von Spinoza bis auf die Gegenwart*, Berlin, 1833; O. Seibert, *Religionsphilosophie in Deutschland*, Langesalza, 1906; J. Hessen, *Die Religionsphilosophie des Neukantianismus*, Freiburg, i. B., 1924; A. Lewkowitz, *Religiöse Denker der Gegenwart*, Berlin, 1923; P. Kalweit, *Die Stellung der Religion im Geistelsleben*, Leipzig, 1908; E. Przywara S. J., *Religions-Begründung*, Freiburg i. B., 1923; E. Boutroux, *Science et Religion dans la philosophie contemporaine*, Paris, 1909; A. Loisy, *La Religion*, Paris, 1917; G. Wobbermin, *Das Wesen der Religion*, Leipzig, 1925; K. Völker, *Religionslehre*, Leipzig, 1921; G. Simmel, *Die Religion*, Frankfurt a/M., 1922; H. Höffding, *Filosofia della Religione*, trad. Battaini, Piacenza, 1909; L. Feuerbach, *Das Wesen der Religion*, Leipzig, 1923; R. Richter, *Religionsphilosophie*, Leipzig, 1912; G. Ch. B. Pünjer, *Grundriss der Religionsphilosophie*, Bad Sachsa i. H., 1909; O. Pfleiderer, *Religionsphilosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage*, Berlin, 1896; A. Dorner, *Grundriss der Religionsphilosophie*, Leipzig, 1903; J. von Rintelen, *Pessimistische Religionsphilosophie der*

It is the function of philosophic thought to determine in the first instance the method of research both for the historian and for the psychologist, to mark out the field for their inquiries and at the same time to keep in close touch with religious facts in their chronological and geographical order. The science of religion discovers the universality of the underlying facts behind all temporal and local manifestations and, by means of the comparative method, points out their analogies, likenesses and resemblances, while revealing their inner life, and their laws of divergence, convergence and parallelism. Religious psychology traces the universality of the facts and the laws which govern them back to their source—the uniformity of human nature —back to their inherent needs and their particular reactions to the external world. The philosophy of religion, on the other hand, has as its task not only to analyze the objective laws of religious feeling, but also to give it its proper place in a system of values which are not fixed arbitrarily but are determined in relation to the motives, processes and ends that correspond to the inmost and deepest needs of human nature, in which religion has its origin and its justification.

Gegenwart, München, 1924; Hegel, *Philosophie de la Religion*, trad. A. Vera, Paris, 1876; G. Lasson, *Begriff der Religion*, Leipzig, 1925; G. Teichmüller, *Religionsphilosophie*, Breslau, 1886; A. Sabatier, *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion*, Paris; J. Caird, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Glasgow, 1880; E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, Glasgow, 1907; G. T. Ladd, *The Philosophy of Religion*, London, 1906; H. Siebeck, *Lehrbuch der Religionsphilosophie*, Leipzig, 1893; M. Guyau, *L'Irréligion de l'Avenir*, Paris, 1890; K. Kesseler, *Die Religiöse Bewegung der Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1922; *Religionsphilosophie*, Leipzig, 1927; M. Cornils, *Theologie*, Leipzig, 1911; H. Frick, *Religiöse Strömungen der Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1923; A. Görland, *Religionsphilosophie*, Leipzig, 1922; E. Ernst, *Das Wachstum der Religion ous dem Geiste*, Bern, 1924; H. E. Weber, *Das Geisteserbe des Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1925; F. Behrend, *Die Stellung der Religion innerhalb der Kultur und des Begriffs der Religion im System der Philosophie*, Langesalza, 1921; R. Eucken, *Der Kampf um die Religion in der Gegenwart*, Langesalza, 1922; O. Piper, *Weltliches Christentum*, Tübingen, 1924; H. Scholz, *Die Religionsphilosophie des Als-Ob*, Leipzig, 1921; G. Salvadori, *Religione ed Evoluzione*, Torino, 1911; E. P. Lamanna, *La Religione nella vita dello Spirito*, Firenze, 1914; F. A. Ferrari, *Religione nel divenire umano*, Città di Castello, 1922; S. Minocchi, *La Religione come scienza storica*, Firenze, 1923; P. Gentile, *Sommario d'una Filosofia della Religione*, Bari, 1923; A. Renda, *La validità della Religione*, Città di Castello, 1921; C. Dentice de Accadia, *Il Razionalismo Religioso di Kant*, Bari, 1920; G. Monticelli, *La Religione nella coscienza contemporanea*, Pinerolo, 1924.

When, however, the philosophy of religion starts with other objects in view, it assumes other forms. In taking the position of defense of the traditional tenets of orthodoxy it becomes transformed into a theodicy (not in the Leibnizian sense of the word) and thus frequently into a systematic theology, with a dogmatic and an ethical side. It aims at exercising control by defensive action, but in reality it has hardly any influence on the faith of believers and very little on philosophers, apart from the incentive it offers to polemics. This defensive attitude is closely linked with individual systems and often ends in a mere attempt to reënforce the traditional position of orthodoxy, prayer being regarded by some as a gift freely bestowed on man by God (Maine de Biran), by others as a sacred relation which man of his own accord establishes by interchange of thought and feeling with the great Being that transcends him, by others as a meritorious act. Generally speaking this defensive attitude leads, as may be seen, toward the solution of the metaphysical problem to which allusion has been made above.

The negative position of philosophical thought upon prayer really covers the same ground as the defensive. By adopting it, the philosophy of religion, if it does not frankly, like Kant, regard man at prayer as a madman speaking to a wall, at any rate dismisses prayer as a manifestation appropriate to an epoch that we have outgrown (Positivism) or as a fruitless waste of energy (Ostwald) or lastly, as an opiate for the people (Marx) according as history is interpreted from the idealistic, the naturalistic or the economic point of view.

The third position, which tends to reduce the value of religious facts, also usually limits prayer to one particular aspect or motive; but, whereas among most philosophers of religion it is the practice to trace the origin of prayer to a single noble motive, those philosophers who tend to depreciate the facts of religion are apt to assign to prayer a motive which has the effect of depreciating its value.

There has long been a tendency to see in religion a sort of philosophy of the people, a product of mental activity. The

idiogenetic views of Hegel, Caird, Croce and Gentile and the heterogenetic views of Vacherot and Spir belong to this category. The attitude of Max Müller also, who conceives of religion as a need for explaining reality, points in the same direction.

Besides this point of view may be mentioned others which try to trace religion to a mere practical activity, as Kant did and all his numerous followers; or to a product of the critical activity, as Höffding and Della Valle maintained; or to an experience of the Absolute that is inherent in action, as Blondel conceived; or to an adoration of Humanity, as suggested by Comte, Natorp and Loisy; or to the self-adoration of the social consciousness, as Durkheim thought; or to the self-adoration of man in his individuality, as Feuerbach thought; or lastly, following Newman, to an experience of the Divine in the moral ideal. On the other hand the facts of religion are traced to aesthetic activity by Fries and Kirkegaard, and we also have the quietistic pessimism of Schopenhauer, the expansionist pessimism of Hartmann and the biological optimism of Guyau. Finally others with more circumspection, considering that religion cannot be reduced to any one activity of the spirit, think that they can discover its essence in the sum total of these activities, as for instance De Sarlo, Lamanna and Renda; or in a metaphysic of culture, as suggested by Eucken, Rickert and J. Cohen, who assign to religion no other function than that of crowning and completing the creations of human culture.

An opposite standpoint is taken by some modern thinkers, who, following the path opened up by Schleiermacher, try to assign to religion a unique and special position in the life of the spirit. While they show equal respect to those empirical data which are so dear to the philosophers of culture, they recognize religion as an element which cannot be any further analyzed, as a phenomenon of the life of the spirit which is not derivable from any other. This attitude has been taken in Germany by Pfleiderer and still more by Troeltsch and Wobbermin, and in France by Sabatier—writers who at the same time bring out not only the historical, sociological and psychological aspects of

prayer, but also its place in the order of values. So too, Dorner, who endeavors to trace the development of prayer by keeping before his mind an ideal type of it as an aid to the determination of its value. But, while we appreciate both the attempt to stress the specific and elemental character of religion and also the method of recording its value in relation to a hierarchy that is based on an ascent toward an ideal point, yet the analysis of the actual character of prayer and the formulation of an ideal type of prayer could evidently not succeed without starting from a knowledge of its nature and its ends; since ideal prayer can only be that which corresponds best to the moral order which gives it being. Can this be traced perhaps in the eternal need which the spirit has for renewing its life? Görland, who defines prayer as an auto-liberation of the soul, answers this question in the affirmative. But this definition, though it may serve the purpose of telling us something of the subjective effects of prayer as a religious experience, does not explain its nature or the position which it holds in a rational view of the world and of life. Nor are we brought any nearer to an explanation by Panfilo Gentile, who, pinning his faith to the Hegelian *a priori* conceptions, tries to trace the origin of prayer to an opposition between the finite and the infinite, while psychologically he sees it fade and melt into a religious *katharsis* followed by the absorption of the believer in the Divine.

More recent philosophical thinkers about the facts of religion endeavor to assign to them a special domain in the realm of the spirit which will secure them that independence for which Schleiermacher energetically contends. The researches of Cohen and Otto on these lines are similar in kind but unequal in value. They agree in not locating religion in any one activity of the spirit. But for Cohen the facts of religion constitute a particular factor in consciousness, whereas for Otto the religious element is entirely distinct from the rational, the ethical or the aesthetic, and originates in a separate and independent complex, an experience of what he calls "the numinous." We have here in fact something underlying consciousness itself, something which

wells up from the depths of the spirit, though not unaffected by those experiences, impressions and impulses of the external world which evoke and stimulate it. And so the religious experience stands out as clearly distinct from any other not only in character but also in origin.

The various phases of philosophic speculation, then, may be summed up as follows. When tending toward a pure intellectualism it has found in religion merely a body of doctrines and cults and in prayer only a yearning of the mind for knowledge. When it has turned aside toward the practical aspect of religion it has found in the forms of worship only a preservation or reënforcement of ethical, biological and social values. When the view of religion and its forms of worship has been lit up by the light of artistic creation, it has seemed to recognize in those forms merely the meeting of a need for aesthetic contemplation. Finally, when religion has been linked up with all the underlying complexities of the life of the spirit, philosophy has endeavored to explain it as a synthetic activity. And since, in every case, religion seemingly has tended to sink and lose itself in those adjoining regions where the workings of the human spirit are different in character, speculation has set itself resolutely to the task of probing still deeper into the obscure regions of the subconscious or into the irrational forms of activity which might make intelligible not only the religious life but also its central act of prayer.

I will not pause to consider those theories which interpret the origin of the facts of religion sometimes as a product of social life (Wundt's theory of the "hetero-genetic" origin of religion as an imaginative source of myths and magic cults), sometimes as a product of "the unconscious" (Meyer and James). Nor will I pause to consider now, as I shall deal with it more fully later on, that philosophy of religion which traces the sources of the religious feeling in man, of worship and of prayer, to an irrational phase of the spirit. What I have already said will, I hope, be sufficient to show what is the present position of the philosophical problem of prayer, a problem which

must be taken as summing up and completing historical as well as scientific and psychological investigations. Among those, however, who have tried to give an account of the origin and development of the laws of the advance and decline of prayer, we find only too frequently either a neglect of empirical data and psychological researches or on the other hand the dominating influence of some particular system of thought, which forces prayer to take an *a priori* position within its framework. That philosophy of religion which is working its way through—now amidst the débris of a phenomenology of history (Hegel), now by a process of determining the essential characteristics which it derives from ethical principles and values (Schleiermacher, Sabatier, Hermann)—has already advanced toward an understanding of the mystery of the man at prayer but has not yet recognized his significance. On the threshold of that mystery we come face to face with an array of investigations which I shall proceed to describe in the succeeding pages.

CHAPTER II

The Problem of Methodology

Many different methods have been adopted for the study of prayer. Theologians and anthropologists, historians and ethnologists, psychologists and philosophers have shown no hesitation in expounding their particular methods and a rich bibliography of works written to plan has grown up. The task of these historians has been to give a description of religious facts in geographical and chronological order, but in many cases they have shown a tendency to go beyond these limits and to penetrate not only into the distant origins but also into the nature of prayer. The anthropologists and ethnologists, whose duty it has been to deal with the elementary forms of the religious life and with the circumstances under which it appears mixed up with non-religious matters, have often fallen into the error of assigning to religious facts not only an arbitrary development but also a no less arbitrary derivation from other facts that are not religious. The psychologists, even when they are not tempted to try to penetrate into the nature of the religious life through the dangerous door of psychopathy, have often, by concentrating their attention upon subjective facts, come to maintain that religion, and therefore also prayer, can be merged and absorbed, without leaving any trace, in the experience of the subject. The philosophers and the theologians, in their turn, have often been tempted to mutilate prayer by forcing it into the procrustean bed of their respective systems.

In saying this I confine myself to the cases that occur most frequently.

On the one hand the historical religions and their apologists,

associating the origin of religion with a divine revelation, take up a position outside the ordinary series or sequence of causes. On the other hand the historians claim to be able to follow religious facts from their very source, which would not be possible if, as the former party asserts, those facts were of a super-historical character. This has led some people to ask whether the historian can recognize, isolate, understand and follow religious facts in their chronological succession and geographical distribution without exceeding the limits of his capacity, without going beyond the simple description of the external relations of facts—a proceeding which would be essentially super-historical.

But if one reflects that all human facts can, as such, be objects of history and that even facts that are supposed to have a divine origin must, as soon as they come within the realities of space and time, fall inevitably under the category of ordinary causal sequences, it will be readily seen that the answer to this question must be in the affirmative.

The question has been put in other terms. As we have seen, the philosophy of religion, from Schleiermacher to Rudolf Otto, tends more and more clearly to show that the religious fact is unique, that it cannot be reduced to or deduced from anything else. This leads rather to the conclusion that, for the ascertainment of historical facts and for the description of other causes and other effects with which those facts are connected in the complex framework of human events, a special kind of spiritual discernment is required, if one does not wish to fall into serious mistakes. I need only mention that type of historical materialism which (realizing that the basis of history lies in industrial relations or in economic conditions, whether in respect of legal enactments and the establishment of laws and constitutions or in respect of customs and social and ethical feelings which are reflected in art, science and religion[1]) has been led automatically to reduce the scope of religious institutions and

[1] Cf. A. Labrola, *The Economic Theory of the Political Constitution*, Rome; B. Croce, *Historical Materialism and Marxian Economics*, Palermo, 1900.

movements to mere expressions of those industrial relations, and thus to be blind to that sense of religion, the meaning of which it had not the capacity to comprehend.

Our claim that the historian should describe events to us not only in their geographical and chronological but also in their causal bearings, demands a special quality of mind when it is a question of tracing and explaining the causes and effects of phenomena which frequently elude the most careful analysis. Evidently the historian must here invoke the aid of psychological science. This is in fact borne out by the best modern researches upon cults—researches which the writers themselves call historical-philosophical or historical-psychological, thus implicitly recognizing that pure historical research is insufficient for disclosing to us the most important element in religious facts, viz., not how they have occurred but the inner meaning of their historical occurrence.

There has been much discussion over the theory of knowledge underlying the historical method. H. Rickert has broken more than one lance against that methodological monism which, up to a few years ago, exercised despotic sway. He has shown clearly how human reason makes use of different means for controlling the contrasted material provided by nature and by history;[2] and he is the author of the dictum: "Reality becomes Nature if considered in its general aspect and History if considered in a particular aspect." But without going to the extremes to which we might be led by this reaction against applying to historical studies the method of natural science, we must admit that this method cannot be applied to history without special adaptation to the nature of the facts. The complete application of the method of natural science could not make allowance for the special energies which reside in the spirit and which break out like irrational needs and impulses in the life of reason, and could therefore not satisfy the requirements of historical knowledge.

[2] Cf. H. Rickert, *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, Tübingen, 1921; *Die Grenzen der Naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, Tübingen, 1921.

G. Wobbermin, with his psychological method,[3] has done well to bring out the necessity of emphasizing the specifically religious motives in all their purity; and he appeals to our capacity for sensing all that is inherently religious in the story of man.

We here touch upon a somewhat delicate question which needs to be considered with proper reservations. It is well known, for example, that in order to appreciate music or painting or art in general, or even to observe the sky with the aid of optical instruments, one requires a certain practice, a training of the senses; but few people imagine that for the knowledge of facts outside the range of ordinary experience, such as the internal states of mind which determine the historical incidence of religious events, special preparation, temperament and ability are required. But since historical religion has arisen and thriven in virtue of motives which are seated in the innermost depths of human nature, one must develop a sensitiveness that will enable one to catch even the lightest breeze and to have the water diviner's power of piercing with the senses the dense layer which too often hides jealously from the scrutiny of even the most sensitive the secret tremors of the religious soul. Science has the task of enriching men's consciousness of truth, and religion has that of realizing in practice the vital possibilities of consciousness under the active inspiration of the divine spirit. Science is the power which extends the human personality beyond the confines of the corporeal world and religion is the actual enjoyment of that power. Only a distant echo of the mystery reaches the historian; he cannot proceed except by way of intuition. But there are certain considerations of an abstract and theoretical character which it is desirable to emphasize in order to indicate, at least in general terms, the limits of historical knowledge.

Kant himself failed to bring out the fact that, of all types of knowledge, historical knowledge is the most completely con-

[3] Cf. G. Wobbermin, *Die Religionspsychologische Methode in Religionswissenschaft und Theologie*, Leipzig, 1913.

ditioned by the nature of the facts with which it deals and the attitude of mind of the investigator. It would be absurd to claim from history an objective realization of the importance and the essential character of a personality or a community—especially in a field like that of religion, where one needs, as I have said, not only a special sensitiveness and capacity, but also an exceptional attitude of mind, which refuses to be led astray by any bias it may have toward changing the color or significance of a narrative. This disinterestedness is more difficult to achieve in religious history than in any other; and that is why we find that in this branch of history, unlike others, the credibility of the evidence usually increases in direct proportion to the distance which separates the narrative from the events which form its subject matter.[4]

But it is useless for the historian to labor at the collection, choice and critical examination of documentary material, unless he feels the necessity of bringing to bear upon his estimate of the credibility of the evidence (which especially in religious matters is seldom free from prejudice and suggestion[5]) a broad vision of the sum total of the events in the midst of which these incidents occurred, and from which they cannot be separated without distorting and falsifying their appearance.

Nor on the other hand can this rich vision present itself to our eyes unless we abandon the commoner form of vision given by immanence and naturalism, unless, in other words, we consider the facts of religion in their more luminous and creative aspect, and understand them as signs of a reality which is reflected in them and through which history at length acquires a meaning for our life and for our most fervent aspirations.

In order then to reach the inner meaning of the facts of religion, we must proceed to a synthesis which will not be merely a bare reconstruction of them but will be at the same

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[4] Cf. M. Puglisi, *Il Problema gnoseologico nella storiografia religiosa*, Roma, 1923; *Il Metodo nella storiografia religiosa*, in "*Actes du Congres International d' Histoire des Religions*," Paris, 1925.

[5] Cf. A. Beyer, *Religion und Suggestion*, Halle a S., 1922.

time a realization of their values—and that not merely in reference to time and space but also in reference to a preëstablished order. We must in fact raise ourselves gradually from the plane of verification and description of real facts to the wider plane of knowledge of that human nature which gives rise to them and thence to the universal process of reality.

But the mere statement of this program is sufficient to show that here we are not in the realm of historical research or psychological investigation but in that of philosophic reflection. This leads beyond that "hierosophy" which constituted for Goblet d'Alviella the last of the three stages of religious "historiography," and harmonizing the facts with its vision of the world and of life opens up to us two different methods of assigning values. One method is directed toward the sequences of cause and effect and explains to us the origin and development of facts within the domain of historical contingencies; the other tends to find out the objective significance of this actual chain of causes. The former method, starting from a detailed and complete survey of the facts, implies a choice and a grouping, and has a utilitarian character. The historian, following this course, finds most value in what helps him most to attain his end: his choice has a utilitarian value, his end a relative value. The latter method, on the other hand, excludes and repudiates everything of a utilitarian character; it is not confined to the field of relativity; it does not find its standard in the world of empiricism and contingency. Its values are not on the same plane as those which serve in the changing conditions of time and space or for the purposes of historical analysis or synthesis, but rather are the base and standard for the validity of our every judgment. Between these two methods of assigning values lie the boundaries which separate historical and philosophical research.

Prayer, like all other forms of religious activity, cannot escape from this double system of values, implying as it does a series of stages determined on the one hand by the importance which it derives from geographical and chronological conditions and

on the other by an objective value which prayer inherently possesses. The conception of successive degrees of value, which, according to the Brentanian theory,[6] was first applied to the moral order and then to the biological, thus illustrating the close relations between ethics and the modern conception of life, now finds its natural application to the data offered by the plain course of religious history. But if we are able to claim that prayer is the highest and sincerest expression of man's religious life, do we base that claim on its geographical or temporal associations or do we not rather base it on a hierarchy of values, which, on *a priori* grounds, sets above material utility (which only relatively can be more pressing) the preservation and enhancement of spiritual values? And if we can, in the historical development of prayer, determine a hierarchy of values, is it not because, in the same way, above the eudaemonistic activity (the activity stimulated by motives of self-preservation) we place the aesthetic activity, and above that we place the intellectual activity and higher up still the practice of good and of justice? And do we not do this because we value most highly that which has the greatest importance, not only in reference to the sum total of things but also in itself—a final goal which does not reveal its value in comparison with other goals but through direct and immediate intuition? We have not much difficulty in realizing that only thus is it possible for us to gather the inner meaning of religious history and to arrange the different religions in a scale of value; that only thus can prayer be understood, both in the different hues which it takes from local environment and in its relation to an ideal standpoint, which reveals its unique character as well as its meaning and value in the economy of the spiritual life.

This means a revolution in the usual methods, which have always, so to speak, examined the facts of religion from below upward, in order to follow them in their diverse manifestations.

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[6] Cf. Franz Brentano, *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis*, Leipzig, 1921.

To-day, however, even in the realm of positive sciences, the conviction is growing that the life of an organism can be better understood if it is considered not so much in its functions of the moment as in relation to those supreme ends which lie behind the more immediate ends of its existence, when it is assigned its place in a universal system in which its existence is seen only as a phase and a function of the whole. If we supplement our philosophic reflections about religious facts in general, and about prayer in particular, by the biological concept of the end, we shall have consolidated our outlook upon the course of events, we shall have freed ourselves from the narrow tendency to find in the genetic method the sole instrument for scientific investigation, and we shall at the same time have given a most powerful aid to our system of values. As a matter of fact, if we confine our view of prayer within the bounds of the individual and social life we do no more than skim its surface. It is true that as this is the only field in which empirical manifestations of prayer have taken place, it might at first sight appear dangerous to go beyond it. In reality, however, the meaning of prayer inevitably goes beyond it; and it is because of this fact that if we wish to grasp its meaning we too must, without quitting the solid ground of empirical facts, look at prayer from the point of view not only of its determining motives but also of its ends. And the only way to find these is to pursue our inquiry into prayer not by following the track of causal sequences on the genetic method, but by seeking out those ends which it reveals by its functions in the life of the spirit. The man who understands life best is not the one who lingers laboriously over the past, but the man who also directs a keen glance toward the future—and not only toward a real future but toward an ideal future which guides human destinies more than we realize. If we take our stand, under this method, at the center of our spirit we can follow prayer in its ascent and, from the position which it occupies, mark its value in a scale that is ever ascending toward its highest function.

In history this ascent is visible in those tendencies and creations which betray a diversity of aim and to which empirical facts appear to be directed. In fact the historical effects of the most striking events show, if we look closely, that they diverge from the aim toward which, according to all appearances, they seem to be tending, and, as it is diversity of aim which makes history living, so it is the same diversity which creates a fresh manifestation, emerging like an unexpected and unforseen creation.

We thus escape from a purely mechanical interpretation of facts. The deeds of Alexander, the beginnings of Buddhism, the beginnings of Christianity cannot be understood without the intervention of unexpected human energies, individual and collective, which cannot really be reduced to a mere play of mechanically directed energies. "History," it has been said, "is the child not only of destiny but of liberty." And this is quite true if it is taken to mean that it is not a mere product of mechanically ordered actions but also of energies that spring from the actual activity of historical life, like something that does not grow out of its essential being and is not produced by what was contained in causal relations but from an end which transcends all empirical intimations.

This vista of ends which opens before us in our survey of history is rich in promise. To endeavor to find in its broken records, its details, its shifting points of view the meaning and value of prayer would be as great a mistake as to try to gain in idea of the ocean from a drop of water shining in the sun on the petal of a flower. The meaning of the whole is not given by the part; broken fragments cannot yield a sense of unity. It is only because we have an intuition of the unity of the personality that it never appears to us as a chaotic aggregation of activities but as a whole, corresponding to a real unity and giving rise to an activity which is perceived by us empirically in its broken fragments but only teleologically in the totality of which we have intuition. Mechanism and teleology are therefore two aspects of that process of becoming which is presented to our

empirical view as broken and disfigured if we cut it short by looking at one aspect only.[7]

Now if we bear in mind that the facts of religion can only fully disclose to us their meaning under the unitary and not the fragmentary actuality of their historical aspect, if we bear in mind that they look beyond themselves to the contingent ends of history, like something that reaches forward toward what is not fully realized—then we see that it is solely in the vision of a sum total of historical actualities and ends that we can understand their meaning.

As a historical fact, therefore, prayer should be studied in all its fullness and in the ideal tendencies which it reveals even in the midst of those historical associations in which, at first sight, it seems to arise and with which it seems to merge. In the task of determining these tendencies, these aspirations, this longing that the soul manifests in prayer, help is obtained from the history and psychology of religion, when they tell us that religion, in its best moments and its highest functions and ends, is a liberation from evil, a yearning, a vital impulse toward the Divine. We shall see later on what the meaning of prayer may be in the domain of these functions and ends. But if it is the movement toward these ends that serves to reveal in prayer a meaning deeper than that which emerges from its historical and contingent relations, then, without fear of contradiction, we may say that, in tracing its gradual approach toward that meaning, we may set up a scale of values. And by that means we may safely determine the eternal element which may be said to be contained in prayer and so may open up a new vista for metaphysical researches.

[7] Cf. Müller-Freienfels, *Die Philosophie der Individualität*, Leipzig, 1923; *Metaphysik des Irrationalen*, Leipzig, 1927.

CHAPTER III

Unity and Universality of Prayer

From what I have said in the preceding chapter it may be gathered that all empirical consciousness receives fragmentary impressions and that it is only through the intuitive power of the spirit that we are able to perceive that unity which eludes the world of sense. History shows us isolated prayers, prayers which we can classify and catalogue, but it does not show us the unity of prayer, a unity which we can only perceive amidst and above its various manifestations in time and space.

This should enable us to come to wider and more comprehensive conclusions and in particular to see that the history of prayer cannot be reconstructed by the summation or juxtaposition of its localized histories, just as it is not possible to reconstruct a living organism by a union of its parts.

But if the history of prayer, like that of any other product of the human spirit, can only be reconstructed by a broad survey of its fundamental and inherent unity; if the history of prayer is, like history in general, a continuous, uninterrupted succession of events causally connected and inseparable one from the other if it does not break up into its local and temporal manifestations—that is because the life of the spirit which produces its various shapes and forms is one and the same throughout. If looked at merely from the outside, prayers may, because of the artificial distinctions of time, place or belief—under cover of such terms as Antiquity or Middle Ages, Renaissance or the Modern World, East or West, Church or Sect—appear like unconnected phenomena or a chaotic collection, with only a superficial relationship to one another; but when regarded from the

inside prayers impress us as being an inseparable unity, a special attitude of mind which takes on different forms under its different historical manifestations.

The recent attempt of Oswald Spengler to consider culture not in its indivisible unity but under groupings separated in point of time and space cannot but fail to satisfy our sense of fitness; for it prevents us, at the very outset, from seeing beneath the differences of language, of customs, of all that constitutes culture, that identity of determining motives and ends, that common source, that common bond which unites the cultural development of different nations in a unity which goes beyond each particular grouping.

Here the science of religion has come in usefully with its documentary material to throw light upon some of the most important problems of religious philosophy and particularly that of the fundamental unity of religious facts. Useful help has also been afforded by the psychology of religion, which enables us to trace back the various expressions of religion to their single source, and in particular to trace prayer back to a single unmistakable attitude of the spirit.

This is why we can recognize the basic identity of prayer, whether we see it in the cave dweller beating the ground impatiently with his hands and forehead and calling upon his god of the netherworld or the worshiper kneeling in ecstasy beneath the impressive grandeur of a modern church or the amazing vastness of the starry firmament.

The dominance of particular interests has for many years confined the operations of prayer within the narrow range of the practices and formulas of definite religious institutions and doctrines and has prevented men from perceiving its intrinsic unity beneath all its outward aspects. Those, however, who have understood prayer best and have tried to say what it is, have resorted to definitions which reveal its essential and fundamental unity. In fact, St. Paul, when setting himself to explain to the Romans in what prayer actually consisted, found that the best thing he could do was to identify it with communion between

the human spirit and the divine. Religious men of modern times such as Maine de Biran, Amiel and Lambruschini describe prayer as an act of meditation; and it is precisely because it can be recognized in the religious minds and the forms of worship of all times and all places that contemporary psychologists such as Segond have been able to maintain that it can be reduced to certain general characteristics. Take the various aspects in which we meet with prayer. It may rest in silence within the soul of a solitary suppliant or may manifest itself in the sumptuous liturgies of a great church; it may well up spontaneously from the heart of a religious genius or may be repeated monotonously by a congregation which prays from habit; prayer may be, as F. Heiler says, the mechanical recitation of an unmeaning formula or the joy and solace of the heart; a scrupulous fulfillment of a precept or an irresistible outburst of overwhelming emotion; a voluntary concentration upon a religious object or an impulsive invocation or exclamation; a calm and silent meditation or a loud impetuous outpouring of prose or poetry; an exalted light in which the spirit bathes or a sad lament of the suffering heart; a joyous thanksgiving and enthusiastic praise or a lowly plea for pardon and pity; a childish yearning after life, health and happiness or a seeking of energy for moral struggles; a request for daily bread or a consuming longing for the Divine; self-centered desire or altruistic care for the brethren; cursing and thirst for vengeance or intercession for enemies and murderers; eager importunity or renunciation and sacred indifference; the trembling tears of a sinner before a stern judge or the trusting words of a son to a merciful father; persuasive and elegant phraseology for an inaccessible king or unrestrained confession to an affectionate friend; a humble request from a servant to a powerful master or a loving dialogue of a bride with her celestial spouse—but whatever may be its form or its content prayer is always recognizable as a unique and universal fact. Moreover, wherever it is recognized it is considered one of the most important and indispensable acts of religion—so great, according to the words

of the poet Verlaine, as to make even the angels bow before its name. "Born before the stars and the flowers," says his poem, "it will see the end of all things, and, without asking man whence he comes and who he is, it laments over his misfortunes and exults in his joy."

A whole epoch elapsed before the appearance of the first religious cult in prehistoric man, an epoch in which anthropology and prehistoric science have failed to find any trace of religious feeling or worship. Geologists tell us that the human race has existed for thousands of centuries; anthropologists trace man's ancestry back to the anthropoid apes that had neither language nor religion. It is still uncertain whether palaeolithic man, who without doubt had acquired various arts, practiced any religious cult, although, judging from the surviving traces of his civilization and from the light thrown upon them by the corresponding civilizations of savages of the present day who are actuated by religious motives, one is inclined to answer the question in the affirmative. The problem of the origin of religious worship is one which eludes all prehistoric researches and for every advance which science makes toward tracing back the past fresh lines of inquiry open up before the eyes of patient researchers. It is quite probable that thousands of years in which there was no religion preceded historic man's first cult; but it was in the dark night of those thousands of years that the human spirit was being prepared unconsciously for receiving the light, the vision of which was to arouse in him the first religious emotion. When the soul first awoke to prayer the first temple had not yet arisen, but from that time forward prayer bore its indelible marks of identity; and when the first temple arose there spread around it continually a far-reaching sphere of religious feeling which would never be entirely compressed within it. It never will be so compressed, for what is universal can never be completely contained within historical institutions.

The ancient hymns that were sung in the woods of Thrace by Linus and Orpheus and by the Aryans on the plateaus of Asia sprang from the same fervent religious emotion as the

ardent prayers which rose from their temples. Prayer flourished then, as it flourishes still, within the great religious institutions, in the wildest forests, in the valleys and on the high peaks crowned with snow, as well as in the silence of the scorching desert, on the long coastlines of breaking sea and along the shady banks of rivers that move and murmur like living things. In every age, when man has risen to the contemplation of supreme beauty he has, without learning, created art; with every step that he has taken toward knowledge he has drawn nearer to the work of creation and has renewed his homage to it; with every emotion that he has experienced in conscious contact with the divine the prayer that lay within his heart has taken a new flight upward.

It ought not, therefore, to be difficult to see that this religious act cannot completely reveal its fundamental characteristics within the bounds of time and place or under the particular limitations of the historical circumstances in which it grows and functions. Religious institutions do not originate prayer: on the contrary it is prayer which, springing up independently, necessarily originates them; and when these institutions have arisen, it sustains them. If once this religious craving is stifled their life is completely destroyed; if once the flame which burns in the religious conscience is extinguished all religion is at once made sterile and any form of prayer is withered up and reduced to an empty formula without meaning.

Now it is precisely this realization of the fundamental unity of prayer, through all its fragmentary and imperfect embodiments, and this realization of its universality, which enable us all the while to apply the fertile concept of development. For without this element of unity, constantly present at each point of its manifestations, and without the merging of individual facts in the universality or totality of all their visible appearances, it would be absurd to apply the concept of development, which necessarily implies a persistence of the same original element amidst the most diverse changes both in the realm of experience and of ideas.

What are the laws of this development? Sometimes writers on the philosophy of history, when they put to themselves this question, have tried to explain those laws as consisting in advance and retreat, in progression and retrogression under different forms. But as a matter of fact no hypothesis is so unlikely to be true as that which conceives development as a straight line tending upward. What comes under our observation is frequently a spasmodic movement, a series of developments which extend in parallel lines, producing the same effects in different times and places. I have alluded before to the so-called historical law of parallel civilizations. Here I may add that the appearance of genius is like a sudden flash, and that its action resembles not so much a consequence of a preceding development as the creative action of a new age.

One law, however, which covers the whole process of life and from which none of its manifold manifestations can claim exemption, is found in the two tendencies of creation and preservation, which set up a constant alternation within which the conflict of the human spirit takes place. Visions of the past and visions of the future are interwoven with tears and smiles in human effort and scatter forever on the path the thorns of disillusion and the flowers of hope. Between these two poles life is unraveled and develops; between these two points history expands and takes shape. If, half weary of our triumphs, we recoil, after completing a trajectory, within the rigid fixity of institutions and systems; if under the stress of fear we sometimes see salvation only in the repetition of the past, with equal stress we feel again later on the irresistible rush of creative activity, and with our eyes turned to the future we resume the arduous interrupted effort of creation.

This alternation can be traced in the history of every human production. The whole life of prayer, from its early beginnings till the present day, all the spirits and forms in which it has expressed itself, all the cravings and emotions which have given it shape are included in these two tendencies, are developed in this eternal drama. If we do not see this in the first glance that

we cast upon the history of prayer, it is because that history has seldom preserved for us the documentary evidence of a free development, of a strong individual enthusiasm, especially if it is a rebellious one or in conflict with tradition. What the most ancient documents have handed down to us are the prayers that have been collected in sacred books and rituals or preserved in the traditions of orthodoxy. They have transmitted very few examples of prayers that grew up outside these traditions; and we possess fewer still of those that arose from the sporadic heterodox rebellions which are always ready to break through the confines of the great mass who follow past custom. Orthodoxy tends consistently to incorporate and correct the rebels or to suppress the sacred rights of liberty of conscience; rebellions tend to reshape or break up the unity of tradition and the compactness of an institution into a hopeless atomism.

But it is useless to try to suppress either of these two tendencies; for both are the very essence of life, the real cause which has made man what he is. In them is found the tragic condition for all renewal and progress, to them is due that vigor and efficiency of existing institutions which alone enable them to continue as inspiring forces in the march of civilization. Destroy tradition and you will have reduced the life of the spirit to a disjointed series of creations; without continuity you will have rendered it ephemeral and ineffective; for at every turn the creation of something new would take place and yet this creation would remain without effect, since it would be without a cause. If on the other hand you suppress creative initiative, you will have confined and enclosed the whole of life in a continual and barren repetition of itself.

If you forget that in this eternal drama lies the secret of every victory and every defeat, of all decay and renewal of religion; if you forget that in this perpetual alternation lies the secret of life and of death; then you are either trying on the one hand to destroy religious institutions in order to set the spirit definitely free from all fetters of tradition, or on the other hand you are returning into a round of routine drudgery in order to confine

the creative activity upon a different plane—the plane of preservation and stagnation. But it is from this eternal drama that the power is generated which enables the human spirit to soar continually into a greater and greater fullness of life, a higher and higher realm of light.

Part II

PHENOMENOLOGY OF PRAYER

CHAPTER IV

The Awakening of the Soul to Prayer

(a). *The Irrational Phase of the Awakening.* Even if we make every allowance for the exaggerations of the genetic method—which professed to find the key of existing ideas and beliefs in the knowledge of their origins, so that, according to J. M. Guyau,[1] to fix a religion's origin was equivalent to saving or condemning it—it cannot be denied that the knowledge of that astounding moment in which the soul awakes to prayer is of incalculable interest and importance.

In order to acquire this knowledge, two methods have been attempted. One has sought the origin of prayer, so to speak, on the outside, whether in a historic revelation or in a product (idiogenetic or heterogenetic) of social life. Another has tried to find it on the inside, whether in beliefs or in particular emotions.

Here a question of general character is involved, a question which has troubled inquirers ever since they attempted to decide whether in religion one ought to give precedence to intellectual or to emotional values. This question involved the philosophic differences of the intellectualists and the voluntarists, who labored hard in contrary directions to determine which of the two psychical activities—intellect or will—ought to have preference over the other.

Where this philosophic struggle was transferred to the field of investigation of religious facts, the point that had to be settled was whether precedence should be granted to myth or to rite.

[1] Cf. J. M. Guyau, *L'Irréligion de l'avenir*, Paris, 1890.

But owing to their absorption in the detailed examination of religious facts historians had sometimes failed to bear in mind that religion can never become purely a function of the intellect, as may be the case with philosophy, nor can it ever be confined to a system of rites or of rules of life. Even in primitive religions—where sometimes it has been possible to see the myth reduced to the position of a rational comment on the rite—the same principle holds good. This rational comment finds its analogy in the more advanced religions when, through a fresh systematization of knowledge, theology has been reduced to finding reasons for primitive dogmas and cults which had either lost their original meaning or had retained one which could not be accepted as reasonable. Here came into play the natural tendency to make intelligible and moral, as far as possible, the irrational elements of religion.

But in reality, if myth is to have a religious significance (though it is not necessary that it always should), if it is not to be a mere exercise of creative fancy, as often happens in animism, it does not arise without a corresponding emotion, which, like the myth to which it refers, becomes an element in religion and a starting point for a cult.

Similarly one may say that a cult could not maintain its position unless it presupposed a myth or a body of beliefs. History in facts offers no example of a religion which does not possess, though perhaps in a quite rudimentary form, myths, beliefs, cults and rites. And the reason for this is because these are not separable one from the other, as are the rules of life which are drawn from them. To maintain therefore, as has sometimes been done, that religion can dispense with one or the other, shows a misconception of its nature and of its function in human life.

Equally unreliable is the old hypothesis which, from the days of Critias to those of Vogt and De Mortillet, has maintained that cults, like religions, have grown up in the interest of the state organization through the action of astute politicians or grasping priests, who were determined to cultivate in the people

the fear of divine chastisement. As this hypothesis arose from actual experience of what religion is apt to become in the hands of statesmen, one need not be surprised that it has found more than one supporter. Machiavelli knew quite well what authority religion gave to a prince when he said that ecclesiastical principedoms are obtained either by good conduct or by good fortune, and that they can be kept without either because they are upheld by religion. Certainly this fact will have lent support to the contention that governments, which are so interested in maintaining religion, are also the creators of it; and such has been the opinion of famous thinkers, as Hobbes and Voltaire. It will also have had an influence in bringing about in other cases a fierce hostility to established religions, which are considered by Marx as an opiate for the people, and by the Bolsheviks and many anarchists and social revolutionaries as the natural allies of capitalism.

Hypotheses that have been more favored by recent ethnological and psychological researches are those which look for the origins of religion in the inner working of the soul or, to put it concretely, in a body of beliefs or in particular emotions. Intellectual preoccupations, such as that of studying the causes of phenomena; animistic or manistic beliefs; beliefs in mysterious impersonal forces, such as *mana* or *orenda;* beliefs in great beings or hero redeemers or founders of civilizations; or even curiosity, wonder, fear, the sense of absolute dependence; beliefs and feelings of a social character, such as totemism or tabuism, or of an individual character, such as fetishism and magic—such are said to be some of the original motives that, either together or separately, have given rise to religion and consequently to worship, under its three aspects of sacrifice, mystery and prayer.

It is said, for example, that prayer has arisen from the relation of the man who prays to an ideal humanity; and this hypothesis has endeavored to find support by pointing to the general tendency to idealize man and the pains that people take in every stage of civilization to deck themselves in gewgaws and orna-

ments rather than to dress in simple clothing. Euhemerus, who long ago held that the gods were nothing but glorified heroes, may be considered as a forerunner of the modern manistic hypothesis, which seeks to derive the origins of prayer from the worship of ancestors or savior heroes or founders of civilization—a worship which is still as widely spread and as ingrained in the popular beliefs as it was with the Ancient Egyptians, the Chinese, the Indians, the Greeks and the Romans.[2] If we get down to the psychological basis of this anthropomorphic belief, we find that it has a solid foundation in an indestructible tendency of the human spirit and that, in spite of the condemnation of Kant, it continues to flourish as much as ever. It seems in fact, according to certain aspects of the history of religion, that if man can ascribe to the Divine nothing but his own virtues idealized, he has been unable to find anything more worthy of adoration than himself. This is what led L. Feuerbach to conclude that the origin of the idea of God is traceable to a projection of an idealized man and the idea of worship to an adoration of himself, or (if we express it in general terms as Comte and Loisy do) an idealized humanity[3] the expression varying according as stress is laid upon the personal or the social element in religion.

Animism, which cannot any more than anthropomorphism be regarded as a religion in itself, is unable to afford any plausible explanation of the origin of worship. In fact, E. B. Tylor,[4] who took his stand upon animism as the source of religion, was unable to trace at the outset either moral ideas or worship. In order to explain their origin, animism has to resort to the superstructures of a subsequent development, which presents as suitable for worship objects to which the conscience can react in a specifically religious manner. It must, however, be admitted that, when anthropomorphism and animism turn to the fostering of religion, they bring out some of the fundamental aspects

[2] Cf. J. B. Jacobsen, *Les Manes*, trans. by Philipot, Paris, 1925.
[3] Cf. A. Loisy, *La Religion*, Paris, 1917; *La Religion et l'humanité*, Paris, 1926.
[4] Cf. *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. 1891.

of prayer much better than the magic that preceded animism does. For while it may be true that magic produces attitudes of mind similar to the attitudes of petition and propitiation so frequently found in prayer, yet the overmastering desire for domination and supremacy leads to an attitude very different from that of the man at prayer, who never exercises, as the magician does, violence or coercion. And just as for the purpose of prayer this impersonal force proves empty and lifeless, so animism and anthropomorphism prove pale and insignificant until the objects which they put forward for adoration have their skeletons clothed in a covering such as every object of worship requires.

Now without pursuing further these hypotheses on the origin of prayer, I hope that it will not be difficult from what I have said to realize that they fail to reveal a motive which would be sufficiently convincing and sufficiently abiding to account not only for the origin but also for the continuance of prayer down to our day.

This fact might have sufficed to raise in the minds of the upholders of these hypotheses a doubt as to whether they were on the right track. I must, however, before proceeding further, point out that the principal hypotheses on the origin of prayer, although each one has no doubt brought out some important aspect, take for granted as a matter of course something innate and fundamental in the human spirit in which the roots of prayer are sunk and out of which these hypotheses must in their turn consciously grow.

This is the case, for example, with the hypothesis—the most widely accepted one—of a historical revelation, which has to assume a particular disposition of mind, in order that it may be recognized as divine and may be faithfully accepted. Spinoza used to say that the prophets of Israel could not have known whether Jahveh had revealed himself to them if they had not somehow had in themselves an idea of the Divine, and Schelling added later that religion could not come into existence unless there were a religious conscience.

The same may be said of the supposed discovery of the origin of prayer in the astuteness and cupidity of rulers and priests. This hypothesis not only, like the preceding one, fails to account for spontaneous prayer, but also fails to realize that the man who prays, whether through fear of divine punishment or to praise or give thanks, must, if he acts religiously, feel in some way the characteristic and unmistakable sense of the Divine. At any rate he must react in some way to the Divine which he has discovered in the object of his worship. On the other hand neither the state nor the ecclesiastical institution could make appeal to a final sanction of the ordinance or to the proved results of prayer unless they assumed the existence of some higher power, unless in other words, they derived their sanctions from some source beyond themselves.

Another question of a general nature about the origin of prayer has reference to its individual or social, its conscious or subconscious coefficients. Psychologists lay emphasis now on the social now on the individual sources of prayer. Catholics usually prefer the former, Protestants the latter. But the fact remains that when people pray it is always through their own personal action, and if this action corresponds to an inner need (without which it is not true religion) it cannot be called a mere product of collectivity.

From estimating the individual and the social coefficient in the origin of prayer, men have been led to examine the part which reflex action plays in it. W. James had called this the greatest discovery of modern psychology, and from his time onward the irrational tendency of the soul to enter into relation with the invisible has been considered by several psychologists as an irradiation of subconscious action. They were thus enabled without difficulty to give an explanation of all the psychological characteristics of prayer. Freud and the psycho-analytical school have gone still further and have claimed that consciousness of guilt was suggested to humanity by the "Oedipus complex" and prayer by the *libido*. For the psycho-analysts the mystical

ecstasy and the sexual ecstasy are regarded as phenomena derived from the same source and the need for prayer, reduced to its organic origins, is regarded as nothing more than a consequence of physiological distress, neurosis and the sexual impulse. J. Chansou[5] is perfectly right in refusing to accept the identification of the normal and higher forms of prayer with those of neuropathics. Still one cannot altogether refuse to recognize the subconscious source of the desire for prayer, a source which, after all, is the great reservoir for biological tendencies, for aspirations, for impulses, for social and traditional inspirations.

Even the need of the human spirit for coming into contact with the One Supreme Being—a need which is at the foundation of any theocentric system which explains the origin of prayer, such as that put forward by modern scholars like Ménégoz[6] and Maréchal[7]—must still be connected with the same subliminal source. As against the intellectualists the question has been raised whether their own dogma may not be a product of that obscure subliminal source; while as against the views of the individualists Durkheim explained the dogma as an impulse from collective energies that have found their way into the intelligence and the will.

The question may be put in the following terms: If the mystic life is represented as withdrawn from the intelligent and volitional action of the individual, is not this equivalent to seeing in it nothing but ephemeral manifestations and ignoring the laws of its normal development? If that is so, psychology will do well to find a midway point between these two extremes, emphasizing the active, personal, conscious aspect of prayer in contrast with those who see in it either a mere attitude of mind produced by specific ideas or a simple uprush of the

[5] Cf. *Etude de Psychologie religieuse sur les sources et l'efficacité de la Prière dans l'expérience Chrétienne*, Paris, 1927.

[6] Cf. *Le Problème de la Prière*, Strasbourg, 1925.

[7] Cf. *A propos du Sentiment de Présence chez les profanes et chez les mystiques*, Louvain, 1909.

sub-conscious, an abandonment, an annihilation of the personality, a passive liberation of the innermost self, where all beings meet and love.

In the sources of prayer there are rational and irrational elements. Without the former it would not make itself perceptible as a deep need of the spirit—a need which justifies itself by its mere appearance. Without the latter it would not be possible to explain the specific character which prayer assumes in dependence on the various dogmatic systems which inspire it.

Among the irrational elements are the emotions of awe and joy, so conspicuous in Christian prayer. Some, however, have confused awe with that terrifying fear which ought to be left out of account as a direct source of religion and prayer; it excludes love, and therefore prayer which is inspired only by fear will never be religious. Awe on the other hand is associated with veneration and with love.

The religious source of prayer cannot, therefore, be confused with the fear of punishment, nor can it be attributed to its relations to an idealized humanity or to associations suggested by fetishes or other natural objects (worship of animals, plants, stones, water and fire) or by the need for assistance or defense on the part of living kinsmen. For the piety, the fear, the awe, the deep respect and the other emotions that these relationships require are in no way the same as the religious relationship. Schleiermacher himself, although he did not perceive that his definition of religion took account only of a relationship and not of the two related terms, had at least recognized that the feeling of dependence could not, by itself, constitute the essence of religion; and, in order to distinguish it from every other feeling of dependence, he added that this feeling was absolute, or in other words absolutely different from that feeling of dependence that may be experienced in relationships which are not religious. In a similar way the Romans distinguished between *sacra privata* and *sacra publica,* the honors rendered to the dead requiring different thoughts and feelings from those rendered to the gods. These hypotheses, however, did not make

the necessary distinction between emotions that were religious and emotions that were not religious. They did not see that, however great the resemblances may appear, the two things fall under different categories. In one case one of the related terms, even though idealized, is still always conceived of as human and profane; in the other case as clearly and definitely sacred. In one case the mysterious and impressive movement of the stars, the majestic cycles of the seasons, of fair and foul weather, of the growth and death of plants and of man is only an expression of the caprice of the spirits that direct them, while in the other case, as G. Van der Leeuw[8] appropriately remarks, we are dealing with the Divine which lies hidden, like something entirely distinct, behind the phenomena of nature. In fact these hypotheses did not discover the line which makes a clear demarcation between the act which is religious and that which is not; and therefore they were not able to find the essential meaning of prayer. In partial justification of their attitude it may be allowed that, at first view, prayer may appear, if one may say so, to differ only quantitatively from the relationship between one human being and another, perhaps because of the persistent anthropomorphism which is constantly threatening to turn the Divine into the human. That it does, however, differ qualitatively as well, may be seen from a brief consideration of the two terms which form this relationship—the Divine and the religious emotion which responds to it. Prayer must be a translation into action of this relationship.

We are indebted to Rudolf Otto and Nathan Söderblom[9] for tracing the origin of religion to a discrimination of the sacred from the profane, for placing the apprehension of the Divine at the center of the religious conception, and the emotion which the Divine produces at the center of worship. Man, who has a predisposition for the Divine, rises to the intuition of it by means of the stimulus given by the unfolding of the universe

[8] Cf. *Einführing in die Phaenomenologie der Religion*, Munich, 1925.
[9] Cf. R. Otto, *Das Heilige*, Gotha, 1926; N. Söderblom, *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, Leipzig, 1916.

before his admiring and awe-struck gaze. But the external stimulus does not create the idea of the Divine; that is within man himself, like the idea of the beautiful, the good, the true and the absolute, not derived from the senses but innate.

Like instinct, like the secret force of will and intuition, like the apprehension of a musical composition which eludes the most subtle intellectual analysis, the charm and mystery of the Divine are outside the range of reasoning. It would be vain to embark on the laborious task of clothing in another garb that which must, from its nature, remain unknown—vain, because our attempts to make it clear to the mind, so far from simplifying, as most people erroneously suppose, in reality complicate and distort our apprehension; unless we desire to follow the example of St. Augustine, who, in order to explain such an obscure fact as the individual predisposition toward faith in a nature utterly corrupted by sin, appealed to an equally incomprehensible fact—the free gift of divine grace.

Religious emotion, then, so far from depending on an intellectual perception of the Divine, is really dependent on experience of a quality that is felt as inherent in the religious object and makes us perceive it as something quite different in kind from anything else. And, as it is impossible for the intellect to make it any clearer, the experience of the Divine must be said to be irrational. This experience—unlike the suprarational, which is divorced not only from all intellectual definition but also from all emotional experience—produces, in those who are predisposed toward them, certain specific emotions, which cannot be confused with other similar emotions or be regarded as a mere summation of those usually experienced.

W. James, who certainly rendered good service in analyzing religious facts from the point of view of feelings, acts and experiences, thus advancing toward a region which lies beyond the rational, still made the mistake of not observing that religious feeling, which is qualitatively distinct from any other, is not a mere name given to a summation of a series of feelings.

Nathan Söderblom is, therefore, right in asserting that the religious feeling is a specific reaction in the presence of something which is perceived as sacred, and in cutting religion clear from all dependence upon myth and all heterogenetic development of mental images and feelings (Wundt), thus linking it up as Schleiermacher had already tried to do, but on new and more solid foundations, to its own roots, which go down deep into the irrational regions of the human soul[10].

But before Rudolf Otto no one had carried the analysis to the point of being able to isolate that original complex which, in order to distinguish it from the Divine, into which intellectual and ethical elements enter in due course, he termed "the numinous." This complex, which is perceived under different aspects—now as something unique and different from everything else, now as something enchanting, overwhelming, endless, stupendous, sublime and even as something tremendous, awful, terrifying—is what sustains both religion and magic, and constitutes that common basis for both which has very frequently led to their being mistaken for each other, especially in the early beginnings, where the conclusions of historical observation and psychological research are more uncertain.

This basic element continues, in successive cultural developments, to struggle with the doctrinal and ethical superstructures and with the eternal effort, which has not yet completely succeeded, to dissociate religion from magic. But, if we remember that the original experience of the numinous is not the equivalent of that religious feeling which is both richer in ethical and intellectual content and tends constantly toward the acquisition of ideal values; and if we omit from our consideration that first critical moment in which the whole of life through the whole range of its manifold activities is struck by an impulse which thrills through it and shakes it from its very roots in every direction and in every part—then we realize that the phase which

[10] Cf. Nathan Söderblom, *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, Leipzig, 1916.

the experience of the numinous represents in the awakening of the soul to prayer, although essential, is yet not the one and only phase.

The revelation of the numinous to human consciousness is the first note which the Divine strikes on the strings of the soul, and the whole soul is thrilled with its harmony and intoxicated with all its light; but the revelation of the numinous cannot yield that particular ethical coloring of the Divine which is conspicuous by its presence in the prayer of great religious geniuses. The experience of the numinous is rather a revelation of a basic original complex, by which the genuineness of every revelation of the Divine that is subsequently perceived can be tested. But it is in its turn preceded by a vital impulse, which is not, like the numinous, perceived by individuals, but acts from the depths of the irrational, like an organic prime mover directing every movement and development of all living beings. This is experienced by every one in every energy which sets life free within the wide radius of its possibilities.

Although, therefore, the experience of the numinous is necessary to the religious life, just as the experience of truth, beauty and goodness is indispensable for the creation of science, art and morality, yet it is by the vital impulse that man is continually urged forward to triumph over pain and death and that the great mass of humanity reaches the same goal. Beyond this goal few, very few, succeed in penetrating into the secret temple of the numinous. Urged on, as all are, by the imperious necessity which leaves an indelible mark on every religious act, it is only the experience of the numinous which, like a mysterious star, guides their eyes toward the regions of the inaccessible and the incomprehensible. But it is the vital impulse which gives rise to those particular functions of religion and prayer which the simple experience of the numinous would never have been able to obtain.[11]

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[11] Eivind Berggrav (*Religionens Terskel. Et bidrag til granskningen av religionens sjelelige frembrud*, Christiania, 1924) has endeavored to show that religion is something personal and individual, but that still it cannot be regarded

In order to understand this vital impulse it will be sufficient to reflect that nothing appears to be more completely the creature of limitations than man. Enclosed in a world of contingencies, of whose threats he is at first inclined, in the instinctive interest of self-preservation, to be more conscious than of its resources, he seems condemned to hammer unceasingly on the bronze walls of the prison which contains his destiny and his glory. It contains his destiny, because man cannot live unless he is enclosed in an horizon, unless he is subject to empirical limitations in space and time, nor can he raise himself unless he agonizes in the effort to do so. It contains also his glory, because the limitations that weigh painfully upon him and the work of overcoming them are necessary alike to rid him of indifference and apathy and to render possible, with the victorious exercise of power, an increase in his worth. Virtue and heroism are tested in danger, and it is only through the continual effort to become better, as Cromwell said, that men become good. In art the vital impulse shows itself by opening out perspectives, by robust reaction to the painful labor of realizing an idea that always lies beyond the attainable; in science by the struggle against the unknown; in ethics by the struggle against evil; in religion by the desire which calls for the conquest of the ephemeral and contingent world through the stern task of reaching what cannot be grasped, of discovering the enthralling mystery, through the ineffable joy of attaining the Divine.

The hold which evil has upon human nature is strong and deep. But no less strong is the impulse for liberation and victory, which at one time works itself out in the empirical world, occasionally taking the most tragic forms, at another time withdraws into the stern silence of the conscience, where forgetful-

as divorced from cultural and spiritual life. It is on the contrary the true center of the totality of human life and is associated with all its manifestations. E. Berggrav differs from James in that he does not look for the essence of religion in extreme and abnormal forms, but rather in the widest and fullest normality; and while R. Otto considers religion as an isolated field, basing himself on the experience of the numinous, the efforts of Berggrav, on the other hand, relying as he does on the impulse to overcome limitations, tend to bring it into contact again with the rest of the life of the spirit.

ness threatens at any instant to sever the present from the past, the uncertain hope from the morrow, the ephemeral effort from the present; where a vain endeavor is made to arrest the moment that is inevitably passing. And it is only by stepping forth heroically to press on toward the unattainable, only by the undying impulse to shatter the bronze walls of his prison, that man can lay hold of the material for building his own glory.[12]

Such, in brief outline, is the function of the vital impulse, which, starting under the sting of pain and the experience of evil, moves forward toward a greater power, a wider domain; an impulse which, almost inevitably, drives every thinking being to find an instrument and an absolute guarantee for the attainment of liberty and victory.

In religion this infallible instrument is represented by worship, in its threefold form of sacrifice, mystery, and, above all, prayer. But when man has found in prayer not only a means of triumph or a source of comfort but also the way, the only way which leads him to freedom, to redemption, to the Divine, he has arrived at those peaks from which a new and a much wider and richer horizon stretches, beyond the confines of the irrational phase of his religious awakening.

(b). *The Rational Phase of the Awakening.* So far we have considered the irrational phase of the awakening of the soul to prayer—the vital impulse which stimulates it to the most varied functions in the life of the spirit, and the experience of the numinous, which sustains its characteristic and unmistakable emotion. We now undoubtedly find ourselves in a better position to understand the nature of the peculiar relationship which prayer expresses, especially if we bear in mind that the vital impulse by no means exhausts itself in activity whose sole objective is the preservation and expansion of the material life.

[12] E. Berggrav and before him W. Windelband (*Das Heilige*, Tübingen, 1916) have brought out admirably the part which is played in religious development by the impulse to overcome limitations; but they have not fitted in the idea of this impulse with the experience of the divine, nor proceeded to the analysis of the specific elements which they contribute to the origin and development of the religious life.

It operates not merely in instinctive flight from those dangers—such as famine, drought, war, sickness, tempests, etc.—which give frequent occasions for the outburst of prayer; rather, as I have already said, it surrounds and stimulates the totality of life in all its forms and expressions. Not confined to material interests, which exhaust themselves in the possession of what is of use for the organic life and its preservation, nor yet confined to the practical objectives of the psychic life, the vital impulse extends also to what is desirable in itself, to what is an end in itself, and therefore to ideal objectives.

This fact is particularly important for investigating the origin and nature of prayer, especially now that in certain philosophical-religious circles the opinion has become very general that religion, and especially prayer, is exclusively devoted to practical ends. It should, however, be easy to understand that since, as we have seen, that craving for mastery and liberty which produces prayer is tending in a given direction, it requires for its development a wider scope than that of a simple affirmation and expansion of the physical life. Nor could the gradual rationalization of the visible and invisible world, which is so necessary for the development of the religious conscience, be conceived unless there existed that interest in theoretical speculation on the first and final causes of things which the various cosmogonies, mythologies and theogonies reveal.

This means that the activity of the spirit is not confined to an instinctive process of preservation and of bio-physical expansion, which is in itself irrational, but extends also to the higher activities that constitute the practical, theoretical and ideal values of the spirit. The origin and growth of the sciences, the arts and religion would not be intelligible on any other supposition. And it means that prayer is not a pure and simple expression of the instinctive interest in preserving material existence, but is also an expression of spiritual life extended to interests of a higher order.

We may interpret in this sense the answers given to that American psychologist who, some years ago, asked several per-

sons of a certain degree of culture what it was that they sought and found in religion. These answers, though differing in form and wording, might be summed up as the expression of a single desire and a single aspiration—life, more life, a life more intense and richer in content.[13] Prayer will in fact, at each stage of its development, preserve this characteristic: while not neglecting in any of its phases the needs of a physical existence, and while not quitting the irrational basis from which it springs, it will always be found to be the only rational instrument capable of liberating, redeeming and transforming man; transforming and renewing him internally by bringing him to the Divine and uniting him with it.

The hypothesis if a pre-logical thought, to account for the logical and moral absurdities that are especially frequent and conspicuous in primitive mentalities, has nothing to do with the irrational foundation of the religious activity. It would, moreover, be inconsistent with the fact that this activity is never completely separated from the rationality by which it is destined to develop. Prayer, as I have said, rises from a vital impulse and from an experience of the numinous, both of which are essentially irrational; but one must not forget that, functioning as they do through the life of the spirit, religion and prayer, in so far as they are consciously directed to clearly defined aims (and we have no instances of civilizations in which they are not so directed), are obviously rational. It does not in fact need further argument to show that prayer is really an instrument which is considered on rational grounds to be adequate for the attainment of those blessings which the worshiper seeks.

The rational and the irrational are, therefore, phases in one and the same development, not two stages, one of which precedes the other and is in some way independent of it during the course of the development of prayer. For as soon as it has arisen from the vital impulse and the experience of the numinous, prayer enters inevitably into the framework of rationality which sur-

[13] Cf. G. F. Moore, *The Birth and Growth of Religion*, New York, 1923.

rounds all manifestations of the practical and theoretical life. In fact, at each stage of its development we find these two phases in which prayer reveals its hidden origin and its glorious end.

It is not so with the hypothesis of pre-logical thought—a hypothesis which definitely marks off a period of insensibility to logic from another period during which that sensibility arises. For if it were true that the primitive mentality does not recognize causal relations except as relations of position and juxtaposition, as Lévy Bruhl supposes[14]—it being of entire or comparative indifference whether one of two given points came before or after the other in time—primitive prayer would then no longer have any meaning for life.

In this connection various examples are quoted, such as that of some savages of North America who took an eclipse of the moon to be the explanation of a massacre which they had suffered some years previously. The eclipse ought, considers Lévy Bruhl, surely to have preceded and not followed the event. But in this case, apart from the fact that we should take care not to make the mistake of generalizing and drawing from one example a conclusion that affects practically the whole of primitive mentality, it is certainly not clear how, even to a primitive mentality, a sign that is given afterwards can explain the reason of events that have already happened. It would be more reasonable to regard the error of those savages not as depending upon the absence in them of the notion of causality, but as derived from the belief that human events have some connection with the movements of the heavenly bodies. There are, in fact, many inconsistent and immoral practices which are due to erroneous beliefs, such as those relating to contact with taboo, to the evil eye or to sympathetic action induced by magic. But when we see the primitive mentality devoting itself to the scrupulous observance of obligations and to avoiding any breach of the laws which govern the social and individual life, we cannot but

[14] Cf. *Les Fonctions mentales dans les Sociétés inférieures*, Paris, 1910.

recognize a continued application of the principle of causality, and at the same time a continued attempt to confine the attention to the scrupulous observance of obligations without scrutinizing their content, especially when it is a question of religious obligations.

What in fact strikes us is that these obligations, associated as they are with emotions, with lack of practical activity or with mental inertia, and due as they are to imitation, to habit and above all to the subtle suggestion or tyrannical action of the community, tend to paralyze the rigorous application of logical thought as well as the examination of the moral content of the obligation. It is this failing that renders it possible for the Bororós to consider themselves not men but "arare" and for the Indian Coda to see God himself within every grain of corn. But we find an abundant supply of similar instances even in those religious faiths which are considered the most advanced, though it never occurs to anyone to pronounce "the modern man" insensible to logical contradictions and the principle of causality. Theology, with the authority of a thousand years of agreement behind it, has only to declare that logical contradictions are supernatural truths, has only to condemn the denial of this as sinful, and at once every believer has sufficient reason to suppress every attempt to submit these affirmations to the scrutiny of common logic.

The specious theory of E. Durkheim[15] according to which the principle of contradiction depends on historical and consequently social factors, must be considered erroneous; unless by the term "historical factors" is meant the habit of accepting as suitable for collective action, without examining their implications, things that are logically contradictory. Such, for example, is the case with contradictory attributes assigned to the Deity itself, sometimes by means of religious syntheses. The synthesis of the beliefs of conquered peoples with those of the conqueror and their subsequent combination in what is often a somewhat

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[15] Cf. *Les Formes élémentaires de la Vie religieuse*, Paris, 1912.

haphazard system can only gradually and in part triumph over the original chaotic mass of religious beliefs and practices, by eliminating one after another of their contradictory elements.

But what has not been sufficiently borne in mind in the history of the rational systematization of prayer, of religious rules and of worship is that many of their contradictions depend to a large extent on precisely this irrational phase of religious development.

Those who, in the discussions about the relations between philosophy and religion, have brought out the fact that religion must always contain a secret world, veiled by a mystery which can only allow man to catch glimpses of the Divine but never to reach and fully grasp it, had already recognized that the field of religion is not coextensive with that of rationality. Religious knowledge therefore, rejecting all analysis of the objects of worship (since these can only be imperfectly presented) and of worship itself, creates that habit of mind in which no believer troubles to concern himself with the question whether his faith and his religious actions are logical or not.

Thus we find that a mythical person may sometimes be represented as a mortal, sometimes as an immortal, as a man or as a woman, as a contemporary or as the offspring of his own father, without thereby raising in the mind of the believer any sense of outraged logic or any feeling that a position so plainly self-contradictory requires explanation. It is enough for him that he finds in religion that numinous quality that cannot be ascribed to the profane world and before which he bends in adoration.

It would, however, be a mistake if, from this peculiar position of the religious world, we tried to extract an insensibility, even on the part of primitive mentalities, to such fundamental principles of logic as those of causality and contradiction. It is sufficient to cast a rapid glance over the religious life of primitive peoples to find in them the same instinctive confidence in their own memories as in the uniformity and regularity of the process of external events. This confidence is clearly based on the prin-

ciple of causality and it enables man to seek and to find suitable and effective remedies for escaping from pain and obtaining what gives him pleasure. It enables him also to find in religion the guarantee for arriving at his desired destiny.

If primitive man had really lived in a pre-logical stage, he ought to have stopped at every step and to have passed from one state of wonder to another every time that he saw water run or the sun rise; and if he had not believed that certain causes constantly precede certain effects he would not have been able to defend himself from dangers or to guide his movements or to resort to prayer to attain the object of his desire. We see on the other hand that man has always employed the methods of comparison, variation and association; has taken for granted the uniformity of nature, as J. S. Mill taught; and has employed the principles of induction and deduction as well as of causality and contradiction, though often abandoning them, especially where religious tradition and the duty of believing it are concerned.[16]

History does not offer, and could not have offered, any example of a cult which does not rest upon a certain systematization of knowledge. On the contrary, a cult cannot be conceived that is not preceded by an interpretation, however rudimentary and mistaken, of the unseen world and at the same time of the instrument which is employed for getting into relation with it. Far from leaving us to conclude that we have to do here with insensibility to the logical or ethical sense, this mistaken theory should rather lead us to recognize the presence of an irrational phase which man, with his instinctive need for rationalizing, continually but in vain tries to explain away and eliminate, employing that well-known potent instrument of research—intellectual demonstration.

Until we limit prayer to the vital impulse and the experience of the numinous, we have only a simple cry of the soul, astonished or frightened or disturbed or fascinated in face of the tre-

[16] Cf. Franz Brentano, *La Rivelazione divina e l'obbligo di crederla,* translated by M. Puglisi, Chiavari, 1926.

mendous mystery, in face of the inconceivable, the wonderful, the majestic, the terrifying, the sublime. Until we conceive of prayer as religious dread, as the flame of a divine yearning, as an ecstasy of mystic transport, as an expression of fear or alarm, awe or anger, hate or sorrow, affliction or joy; or, better still, until we see prayer within the compass of a simple affirmation of the will to live, the buds of reason grafted on *reason's* old trunk will be few and hard to find. But as soon as the characteristic emotional expression of prayer brings with it a certain consciousness of the limitations of human nature and a radiant hope of obtaining by its means the object of the heart's desire; as soon as it requires belief in secret powers or in beings conceived anthropomorphically, to whom a desire can be addressed (prayer, properly speaking, means desire, Εὔχεσθαι), we see many buds of reason already growing on its trunk, the fruits of which will in due course ripen in the light of the logic of thought and feeling—a light which, though not always clear, is yet always present.

I said above that, before word and action (the sole means man possesses for communicating with others) are employed in the specific form of prayer, there must already have been some working out of knowledge and of feeling and some classification of them, thus giving rise to a conception of the effect which prayer can produce and the energies to which it can give free play, and at the same time a conception of the nature and character of the forces with which man, when he prays, seeks to get into contact.

From this we may draw conclusions which have a wider bearing than would at first appear. We have seen how it is the irrational phase and the rational phase, or rather the coinciding of these two essential phases of prayer, the presence of impulses and of experiences which mythologies, theogonies and cosmologies will never cease trying to capture and rearrange under images, symbols and allegories; the constant labor of portraying the unportrayable, conceiving the inconceivable and grasping the unattainable; the ardent yearning to transcend, under pres-

sure of the vital impulse, the boundaries which divide the finite from the infinite—how it is all these that produce and maintain prayer. It will always bear the indelible marks of the motives and the occasions which create it, of the necessity which the vital impulse lays upon it, of the human effort, of the mystery which the experience of the numinous brings. But its history will somewhere show it to us as a pure and simple expression of its two phases, the irrational and the rational. Both these two phases will always continue to sustain prayer. The irrational phase will offer constant resistance to every intellectual and ethical elaboration and superstructure; and they in their turn, will try, with equal constancy, but in vain, to crush and efface it or at least to drive it back to the earliest stages of human development. The most logical attempt which the history of human religion has been able to show, amid these wearisome struggles to make the unapproachable and the incomprehensible fit in with the rational viewpoint, has perhaps been that of the conception of the God-man, a conception which, by incorporating into prayer man's highest ideas of human perfection, has, in anthropomorphic fashion, made God human but has also made man divine. This point has not been appreciated by the philosophic criticism of religion; but it is precisely this inherent presence of the irrational element in the idea of religion and in prayer which gives birth to the contradictions and paradoxical manifestations which, if we interpret them, as some have tried to do, merely as survivals of illogical superstitions, will remain utterly inexplicable.

CHAPTER V

Magical and Religious Phases of Prayer

The association of the irrational with the rational phase of prayer finds its analogy in history in the association of the magical with the religious phase. Recent studies on the primitive forms of religious thought and practices have led people generally to admit that there is a common belief which survives in the religions which are most highly developed and are richest in philosophical and moral content. It is not always clear whether we are to regard the object of this belief as a substance or as a hidden energy which issues from things and men and which, in some mysterious way, can equally do good or do harm. The Melanesians call it *mana*; the Dakotans *wakan;* the Algonchini *manitu*; the natives of the Marchesi Islands *atua*; the Indians *brahman*; the ancient Romans *numina*; the Israelites *el.* It would seem to be a substance possessing everywhere the same numinous qualities, against which man must protect himself and of which he can always manage to make use, directing them to suit his convenience.[1]

It cannot always be called a substance, because sometimes it is conceived of rather as a fluid, but in this form of belief the boundaries between substance and fluid are never definitely marked. In some groups one finds it as an impersonal, in others as a personal energy. We find it even in the New Testament, where a spirit or "pneuma" is spoken of which has the power to regenerate and renew men. G. P. Wetter[2] has shown that

[1] Cf. G. van der Leeuw, *Einführung in die Phänomenologie der Religion,* Munich, 1925.

[2] Cf. *Charis,* Leipzig, 1913.

the word χάρις, usually translated by "grace," means properly divine energy. According to the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen is able to work miracles because he is so full of χάρις and of δύναμις, that is to say of an energy shared by him with God. Paul uses χάρις specially for the power of faith, and the Lord says to him: "My χάρις is sufficient for thee; for my δύναμις is made perfect in weakness." [3]

Many and varied have been the objects believed to possess such hidden energy. In one place are stones or (better still) meteorites that have fallen mysteriously from heaven, or trees that appear as springs of life and ancestors of man; in another place is fire, which, bursting out suddenly from nothing and making the things with which it comes in contact disappear or wither up incomprehensibly, is believed to possess numinous qualities. The same is felt about the wind, which howls in the storm, uproots the strongest trees and dashes down the stones on the mountain tops. And these same mountains, which have at times such surprising shapes, and whose inaccessible peaks seem, when the clouds approach, to produce the lightning and bring the rain (that blood that fertilizes the fields); even the fertility of some animals, such as the bull; the capacity that others, such as the birds, have to conquer the air; still more those men who, as heads of tribes or the family, enforce respect and sometimes stand supreme as kings or emperors—all these, because of their power, are considered to possess numinous force.

If a man does not possess this force by nature, he can acquire it by means of a special procedure; and thence arise ceremonies, cults and rites which enable him to obtain it. For primitive mentalities, which are essentially realistic and materialistic, the image of anything is equivalent to the reality which it represents, and the word and gesture are equivalent to the reality which they indicate or utter. Hence the origin of ritual dramas, mimetic rites, rites of initiation, by means of which primitive man considers that he can subject the world to his will. Hence the rites

[3] Cf. *II. Corinthians*, XII, 9; Otto Schmitz, *Der Begriff* Δύναμις *bei Paulus*, Tübingen, 1927.

of purification and replenishment for the assimilation of new virtues, rites of pilgrimage to mark the main stages in life's journey at which a new substance comes to replace the old, or a new grace to sink into man's inner being.

The word of exorcism and the formula of incantation appear at the first start of the development of prayer. But, when it was realized how the roots of religious worship went deep down in the soil of magic, when it was seen how, in uncultured and primitive societies such as those of the Melanesians and the populations of the Upper Nile and of Africa, the head of the tribe had always figured as a magician,[4] and how he had often combined in one the functions of priest and wizard,[5] it was inevitable that deplorable confusion should arise.

Scholars have frequently raised the problem of the priority of magic in reference to religion. If we look at the primitive civilizations and the oldest documents of the history of religion, the activities connected with magic seem to be so frequent as to justify, at first sight, the view of those scholars, including such eminent ones as Frazer, who confidently declare magic to have been the sole theory and rule of life for the conquest of evil before religion arose. In Ancient Egypt the magicians did not hesitate to claim the power to force the gods to carry out their commands, under threat of destruction should they disobey. The magician declared that he would have scattered the bones of Osiris or revealed his sacred story, if the god had shown himself obdurate to his powerful appeal. In India even, to-day, the great trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva is actually subject to the magicians. Ancient magic, writes Maspéro,[6] was at the very base of religion, since the believer, if he was to hope to obtain anything, if he was to have any chance of succeeding in his purpose, had to do violence to the gods; which could only be done by means of the rites, sacrifices and prayers which had been

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[4] Cf. B. Ankermann, *Die Naturvölker*, in *"Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte,"* by A. Bartholet and E. Lehmann, Leipzig, 1925.

[5] Cf. F. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, London, 1900.

[6] Cf. G. Maspéro, *Historie ancienne de l' Orient classique*, Paris, 1897.

ordained by the god himself and were of such a nature that they would compel him to listen to requests. The Brahmin knew this well; for in his most flourishing period he sought not only to persuade the gods, but also to compel them by means of his esoteric science and special mysterious rites. The ancient Mexican priest also knew this well, when he maintained that he had an infallible influence on the course of the world and of the life of the gods, so that he could secure a good harvest by means of his phallic rites.

But here one may well ask: How can Frazer and many others with him imagine that they can say for certain that humanity, at the beginning, lived in a spiritual environment that was exclusively magical? Can it really be proved, with convincing arguments, that in the beginning man, in order to obtain release from the evils that threatened him and the mastery over hostile powers, made use exclusively of exorcisms and incantations, and was altogether ignorant of prayer? To me it seems an unjustifiable assumption to make a sharp distinction between a period of magic and a period of religion. As between this hypothesis and the other which admits merely a quantitative difference in the manifestations of magic during primitive periods and periods of cultural decadence, the latter seems to be far the more probable. It can, moreover, be proved to be true from a psychological point of view, when we bear in mind what I have said above on the nature of the religious sentiment in man, which does not spring or emerge from irreligious elements. In the human spirit the possibility of the birth and growth of the religious sentiment as a specific function, that cannot be reduced to any other or deduced from any other, must be considered as fundamentally inherent.

From a historical point of view the proof is less decisive, but sufficiently convincing. If we go back and take even a most cursory glance at the most ancient books that have come down to us, if we consult the oldest documents connected with the history of religion and then turn from them to the present day, we can trace throughout the coexistence of the practice of magic

and religion, and we hardly ever find periods in which either one or the other was exclusively cultivated. A great number of prayers and of invocations forming part of the organized religious life of Babylon exhibit the formulae of magic and incantation side by side with religious invocations expressing deep and moral sentiments. What we find is rather an association, an alternation of the magic phase with the religious phase of prayer, never one or the other entirely isolated in its growth. M. Jastrow[7] has maintained that the formulae of incantation with which the Babylonian prayers conclude belong to an archaic period. Bunsen[8] has expressed the same opinion in relation to the history of prayer in Ancient Egypt, where in the most remote times it appears to be made up of magic formulae.

The prayer of Moses[9] during the battle with the Amalekites and also the Greek mysteries are cited as examples of magic prayers. But we find the prayer of Moses side by side with examples of contemporary practices that are purely religious, while the Greek mysteries are based upon the conception of a mysterious communion between the worshiper and the divinity. Those who think that prayer first passed through a period more or less long, in which magical cults were the only cults known, should turn their attention to a fact which is disconcerting for them, viz., that the magical phases sometimes appear more frequently in subsequent periods of the history of religion. This is seen, for example, in the Brahmana, which are, as is well known, full commentaries on the four Veda and therefore undeniably later than them. In the Brahmana prayer has lost its previous character of request, of abandonment of the worshiper to the Divine Will, its character of contemplation, of adoration and communion. In short, it has lost its religious and mystical character and has become instead—magic.

[7] Cf. *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, Giessen, 1905, 1912.

[8] *Egypt*, Vol. IV.

[9] Cf. *Exodus*, XVII.4.Cf. also R. Will, *Le Culte, Etude d'Historie et de Philosophie religieuse*, Paris, 1925. In the Russian liturgy too there are found to-day in its prayers suggestions of similar magic practices.

Nevertheless there can be no doubt that, in general, the magical phases of prayer are more usual in the primitive stage of mentality. This may have given rise to the idea that when we get back still further into the past the religious phase will have entirely disappeared, whereas in reality this is not confirmed by the documents which we possess. Nor on the other hand are we entitled reasonably to come to such a conclusion if we pay regard to the inherent nature of religion. For though religion is always tending, ideally, to free itself from all contamination of magic, it does not succeed in doing so entirely—perhaps because man tends inevitably throughout history to resort, almost unconsciously, to incantation and prayer. Springing, as we have seen, from the same fundamental needs as religion, magic produces, in alternation with it, those human modes of action which aim at liberation, at exercising power, at acquiring mastery, at attaining to a higher life. Yet it remains all the time quite distinct from religion, so that one cannot speak either of a direct descent or of an exclusive priority, whether based upon human necessities or upon documentary evidence.

Prayer, which finds its most spontaneous and natural expression in gesture and in words, may readily be confused with the formulae of magic and exorcism when once the literal meaning of the word or gesture is replaced by a secret and mysterious meaning. First of all there are short monosyllabic words, like the Brahman *om*, which gradually become the key of religious knowledge. Quite often these monosyllables have no real meaning, yet when they are repeated one after the other they come to form that secret language which lies at the back of all secret doctrine. Some magic words can be traced to the primitive worship of souls, which certainly must have helped to give them their spell-like character. Such words have also been found in the history of Mithraism[10] and in other liturgies; but whatever may be the source of the secret language—and certainly the

[10] Cf. A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, Leipzig, 1902.

words do not all come from the same source—we find ourselves here face to face with a vocal symbol which does not differ from that employed in the magic phase of prayer.

And what I have said about words can with almost equal truth be said about the gestures which usually accompany prayer —gestures which, it is maintained, may be traced back to a social and magical-ascetic significance.

Silent prayer also finds its expression in acts of meditation, as in the practice of the Quakers, or acts of humility and devotion, such as those carried out by some native groups of South America. The Yuin of Australia during the performance of their mysteries raise their weapons and their hands to heaven in silence as a sign of respect.

There are some ancient prayers of which we know nothing except the gestures of their ceremonial ritual which have reached us through sculptures and drawings. But the gesticulations of prayer are not always sufficient in themselves to indicate the religious meaning which they contain. When the glorified qualities of a human being or institution are ascribed to the Divine, man, when he prays, repeats the gestures which he would make to the father, the head of the tribe, or the king; and when men learn to give fuller expression to their idea of the Divine prayer approaches that instinctive expression of wonder and of deep admiration which finds its place in true devotion and adoration.

Some pray, as the Sumerian peoples used to and as the Jews do to-day, standing upright and with the face turned toward the divinity whom they are invoking; some pray on their knees, as the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans did; or resting on their haunches, as in the act of meditation in Yoga or in Buddhism (*âsana*), or prostrating themselves on the ground, as was the practice of the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Jews, the Romans, the Indians, and as ancient Germans and the Christians. The avestic word *namas* comes from *nam*, "to bend," just as the Islamic word *salat* is derived from *salaj*, "to bend the back"; hence the name has been given to their prayers. The Romans and the Celts also turned their

bodies round (*circumagere corpus*) when they prayed, the former turning to the right and the latter to the left—a practice which, as Heiler remarks, may be derived from an ancient cult in which men had to walk round the sacred object. A very ancient practice, that of dancing while praying, found its way into the ritual of the Jews and the early Christians.

As regards the manner of holding the hands during prayer, some scholars have maintained that the oldest practice was to raise them to heaven, in the manner of the ancient Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Assyrians, with whom in fact the words *nis ḳâti* mean both "raising the hands" and "praying." So with the Greeks, the words ἀνέχειν, ἀίρειν χεῖρας, which mean "to raise the hands" have also come to mean "to pray," and the same is true of *palmas tendere, tollere* with the Romans. This gesture, which was taken up by the early Christians, was interpreted by the earliest Fathers of the Church, who were ignorant of its original meaning, as though the faithful wished when praying to imitate the suffering attitude of Jesus on the Cross. But the practice was not continued beyond the second century.

Some little figures of the palaeolithic period, that have been discovered in tombs and have been taken to be likenesses of the dead in the act of sacrifice or prayer, seem to represent praying gestures that are still older than those I have mentioned. In particular the attitude of covering the face with the left hand appears to have signified defense against evil influences during prayer. Also the bowing of the head, as shown by some very old statuettes (one discovered at Mentone has the hands on the heart and the head bowed) has been interpreted, although C. Clemen[11] considers the matter doubtful, as a prehistoric gesture in prayer.

Some images of the ancient Egyptian temples show that men prayed while raising one hand and offering a gift with the other. This practice is found also in Babylonia, and the Greeks too, when they approached an altar or a sacred image, used often

[11] Cf. *Religionsgeschichte Europas*, Vol. I, Heidelberg, 1926.

to raise one arm aloft keeping the fingers open. A less common gesture is that of resting both hands on the head—a practice found among the inhabitants of Candy and other places in South Asia, who during prayer also remain stretched out on the ground. Others, such as the Tehuelchen of Patagonia, place one hand on the head or one finger on the nose—a practice which has survived with us as a sign for imposing silence by indicating that the mouth should be kept closed, as it was, in fact, by the Phrygian sects of the Cataphrugians or Quintillians during prayer.

More frequently prayer is begun, accompanied or concluded by clapping the hands. Many clap their hands to salute the rising sun, as the Ewe and the Jews do in their prayer of thanksgiving. In Nyassa, when the Chief conducts prayer, those standing round clap their hands in rhythm. The practice of striking the breast during prayer is very old. In Egypt the worshiper did it with his closed fists, especially during the state of ecstatic transport (*hnw*); and among the Jews it was used to accompany a humble request for a favor.

Less frequent is the practice of striking the head with the hand, of having the hair disheveled and covering the head with dust during prayer, especially when the worshiper is in a state of profound grief. Heiler thinks that this dramatic practice is derived from burial rites. It is not unknown among some Christian peoples, but they prefer to pray with their hands clasped upon the breast, in the manner of the ancient Indians (*añyali*) and of the Tibetans and Japanese of to-day. It seems also that this was the gesture most commonly used by the ancient Germans during their prayers, and that from them it passed into Western Christianity. The earliest documentary evidence that we have of this attitude of Christian prayer is contained in a sepulchral monument of the seventh century.[12] But with the Christians some people also pray with the arms stretched out in front and the fingers clasped, as shown for instance, on a Syracusan sar-

[12] Cf. Vierhordt, *De junctarum in precando manuum origine*, Quoted by F. Heiler in *"Das Gebet."*

cophagus of the fifth century and as is sometimes still done today among us.

Holding one hand in the other is considered by some Roman writers an attitude of prayer, while there are modern scholars who consider it rather as a gesture of magic. Here, however, as elsewhere, the distinction should be looked for not in the original significance of the gesture but in the conception and the feelings which accompany it. Another reposeful gesture in prayer, like that of holding the hands together, is crossing the hands on the breast, an Arab and Turkish practice, which passed from the East to the Western Church, and is found also in Persian Mazdaism. More unusual and certainly more inconvenient is the practice of crossing the hands behind the back during prayer. It would appear that this was intended originally to indicate giving oneself up as a prisoner to the divine majesty. Tacitus, long ago, told how Germans were not allowed to enter the sacred grove except as prisoners in chains. Besides these attitudes of prayer there are others which express marks of affection on the part of the individual worshiper, such as fondling the sacred object, the idol, when coming into immediate contact with it; or embracing the altar, or kissing the object of worship, to show deep respect, or taking off the shoes, or uncovering the head on entering the temple, or undressing as far as the waist or even completely, or holding a tablet over the mouth, as the Chinese do, or concealing it as the Persians do with a square piece (*paitidhâna*), or covering the hands, if only with gloves, as they take care to do in the Hindu cults and as the Persian priests do in their fire worship.

Attempts have been made to account for the origin of these gestures, and various explanations have been given containing those complicated elaborations which are so dear to theologians. The science of religion, however, tends rather to link up these gestures with magical cults and social practices. J. Goldziher,[13] the well-known authority on Islamism, finds in the raising of

[13] Cf. *Zauberelemente im islamischer Gebet*, Giessen, 1906.

the hands a very old magical gesture. V. Schultze[14] maintains that the joining of the hands was intended, in the Roman and Grecian world, to compel the demons to keep away and to bind them to obedience—which would make this action into a purely magical gesture. According to the modern scholars, getting into immediate contact with the idol was intended to impose one's own will upon it. E. Lehmann[15] traces back to ecstatic magic the origin of such practices as rocking to and fro, clapping the hands, dancing, etc., since, while arousing the feeling of ecstasy, they would also signify the attainment of the fullness of divine power. Taking off the shoes on entering the temple has been interpreted as an act to facilitate the entry of the divine fluid into the human body. J. Heckenbach[16] ascribes to total or partial disrobing a meaning analogous to that of the lustration which in some cases precedes prayer; while covering the head, according to A. J. Wensinck,[17] should signify a kind of defense against the attack of wicked spirits, since in some faiths demons are supposed to enter the body by the nape of the neck.

Others, such as F. Heiler, consider it more probable that these acts had a social origin, although they do not deny that in certain cases the origin was undoubtedly magical. Heiler maintains that he has found in the act of salutation the key that explains every gesture that is used in prayer. It is not difficult, however, to prove that this explanation can tell us only part of the truth—partly because it is impossible to explain all the gestures in prayer as a salutation (for example, sitting on the haunches, dancing, taking off clothes, etc.), partly because this very gesture of friendly or respectful salutation, even if it accounts for the origin of an attitude used in prayer, does not in any way explain how this particular gesture came to be used as a mark of saluta-

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[14] Cf. *Geschichte des Händefaltens,* in *"Theol. Literaturblatt,"* 1892.

[15] *Religionswentenskapen,* Stockholm, 1914.

[16] Cf. *De Meditatione sacra sacrisque vinculis,* Giessen, 1911. It is said that Priscillian was "nudus orare solitus." Tertullian (*De Oratione*) has some acute observations on the gestures which accompany prayer.

[17] Cf. *Animismus und Demonenglaube im Untergrunde des judischen und islamischen Gebets,* in *"Der Islam,"* 1913.

tion nor, what is more important, how from being a social act it came subsequently to acquire in prayer a new and entirely religious meaning. Gestures such as bowing the head, touching the ground with the forehead, kneeling and prostration have undoubtedly a social origin; and even the request, into which prayer is sometimes turned, may also be called a social act. Nor is there any doubt that one comes across acts of submission and of expectation even in the Chthonic cult, which required the worshiper to place himself as close as possible to the earth, to touch it with his forehead and his hands and to strike it, in order to invoke the subterranean gods. It is quite certain that in the Chthonic cult acts of social origin are mixed with magical acts. Even the practice so common in Eastern religions—squatting on the haunches, in order to get into a state of contemplation—corresponds to an old way of sitting down, in other words has a social origin. But we must not forget that the religious man, in the act of kneeling and prostrating himself during prayer, feels that he is in the presence of something that is infinitely greater than those earthly authorities to whom these acts of social origin are ordinarily directed. The worshiper who touches the ground with his forehead is trying to express something much more than a simple act of homage. And this is due to the fact that religion has only a partial likeness to the social relationship; for whereas the latter is a link between man and man the religious relationship is a link between the human and the divine.

One must also observe that some of the attitudes have been maintained in prayer not as a traditional survival of analogous attitudes which have lost their original meaning, but rather as gestures calculated to promote the state of prayer. The custom, for instance, that the Romans had of covering their heads when practising religious observances, has an animistic origin, but it is also an attitude that helps meditation—the first stage of prayer. Similarly rocking to and fro, clapping the hands, dancing during prayer have a magical significance; but at the same time they have proved to be suited for producing ecstasy, as has also the

posture of turning the hands to heaven without movement. At the point where these attitudes lose their magical or social meaning, they allow prayer to enter upon its religious phase, by encouraging the requisite emotions. The origin of other postures which precede or accompany prayer, such as contemplation, may be attributed to magic; one may well recall the position of the fingers (*mudras*) in Buddhism, where each one has a magical meaning. A social origin, on the other hand, is traceable in the act of clasping the hands or crossing them over the breast, as the Orientals do, when they salute as a mark of respect and humility. But there is no doubt that a man, when praying, tries instinctively to find the position which aids his meditation or exaltation or which expresses his emotion, without thinking of the resemblance which this position may have to others of a social or magical character, because for him this position has quite another meaning. The inner disposition of the spirit controls and shapes to its own rhythm the outer gestures and these gestures and positions help, in their turn, to create that particular state of mind which is associated with them. "Unclose your fists," it has been said, "and your anger will disappear." Few will believe that their thoughts are more under control than their hands, for in reality they are not. If they were, a gesture would not be sufficient to check passion. Kneel in a solitary place on a mountain peak on a bright spring morning, join your hands and gaze at the distant horizon, the boundless expanse of valleys and sea; if by so doing you do not promote the characteristic emotion of prayer something great is lacking in your spirit. In that case the effects will perhaps be visible, though there are no causes to be seen; just as in the reverse case, the gesture will perhaps be invisible, though the emotion that produces it exists underneath.

In the case of prayer it is evident that the emotion must be specifically religious, even if a social or magical source may sometimes be attributed to the gesture. If it were not so it would be useless to consider prayer as a religious act.

The causal relation, then, which connects prayer and the ges-

ture which accompanies it is the relation of reciprocal actions to one another. These considerations apply also to the direction in which man is required to pray. The early Anglo-Saxons, as is well known, said their prayers standing with their faces toward the rising sun. The Egyptians also turned toward the East but only in the morning; in the evening they turned toward the West. The Babylonians originally prayed with their faces toward the North, afterwards they turned toward the East. The Mandeans maintained the original Babylonian practice of praying toward the North. It is obvious why a man when praying should turn toward the sacred object, quite apart from the analogy in social relations of a man looking toward the person to whom he speaks. But in course of time this matter of direction comes to be considered an absolutely essential condition for prayer being effective, so that prayer is regarded as no prayer at all by the Jews unless they look toward Jerusalem, by the Mahometans unless they look toward Mecca, and also by the Bahaists unless when they pray they seek the direction of Acca. When, however, this requirement no longer corresponds to the spontaneity of a man turning in prayer toward the object to which he prays, we are witnessing the withdrawal of prayer from the center of the religious consciousness to the circumference of barren externalism, its transformation into a habitude and gesture; because its effect is made to depend not really on prayer but on the gesture. Still, turning toward the sacred object may in itself have a religious meaning if it facilitates meditation and tranquillity, the removal of all distractions and the concentration of all the senses on the adored object. It was perhaps through this finding of satisfaction in the feeling about gestures that the very old belief arose that gestures of ritual are able to evoke and command invisible powers. But just as the repetition of words when they have lost their religious meaning runs the risk of becoming a magic formula, so the simple gesture, unless it is used as a preparation, accompaniment and reenforcement of prayer, unless it has its proper significance for the spirit of the worshiper—viz. to complete his internal emo-

tion and make it tangible and more effective—is bound to recede into that old storehouse of magical gestures, which contain solely within themselves their own efficiency and justification.

Among the external signs which threaten to dry up the springs of the religious emotion of prayer may be mentioned lustration, which is common to Judaism, Islamism and Japanese Shintoism;[18] the sacred language, such as Latin and Arabic; the duration, time and place for saying prayer; and above all, the tendency shown in ecclesiastical institutions to leave to priests or monks the task of saying prayers for the faithful. Among the characteristics which make prayer approximate most closely to incantation is the frequent eclipsing of the laity behind the screen of the holy man who says prayers for him. Here the prayer of the laity has at best been transformed into one of those acts which theologians call "meritorious"; but it has completely lost the sense of an intimate and personal emotion, arising from the consciousness in the individual of direct intercourse with the Divine.

One should nevertheless observe that as the same seed, if thrown into two fields of different character, develops differently, so the same experience produces in some incantation, in others prayer. In the former case the holy man is degraded to the level of the magician; the latter, if only he stands like Moses between God and the people, if he prays on their behalf, he is able to arouse their consciences and prepare the way for Joshua, for Samuel, for Elijah, for Amos, who not only pray for the people and in the name of the people, but also teach them how to pray. In the one case rites and ceremonies turn into superstitious customs; in the other they remain springs of deep religious emotions. In one case the worshiper stands apart from the religious act and allows it to be performed by anyone who can best give expression to it; in the other case he takes a lively share in the worship with his whole self, in the consciousness of the need

[18] Cf. Tertullian, *De Oratione* (XIII-XIV), where he speaks of the custom of washing the hands before prayer, a custom common alike to the Gentiles and the Jews.

which he has of being supported by the holy man and of receiving the Divine through means of him. And so, even in an act which seems more likely to turn prayer into an order for carrying out a magic cult, the worshiper can retain, through coöperation with the holy man who is performing the divine office, all the characteristics of the purest religious feeling.

To sum up then, we may conclude that it is not from its external manifestations, the words and attitudes of the man who prays, that we can gather the real significance of prayer, and therefore it is not from these that we can derive the most reliable information for enabling us to follow prayer in its transition from the magical phase to the religious phase or vice-versa. History presents us only with alternations from one to the other. Whether in the most advanced or in the most primitive religions, the difference is only quantitative.

It has been claimed, and not without justification, that purely religious expressions have been observed on the lips of the Ewe, such for instance as the submission of one's own will to the Divine Will. Ethnologists have collected various examples of primitive prayers which correspond to these sentiments. With regard to some of them, such as those of the Orero, who call upon the "Father of all, the Holy, the Unapproachable," it might seem hardly possible that they can be the product of a rudimentary civilization. F. Heiler mentions the evening prayer of the Kekchi Indians, which runs:

> Now I shall sleep under Thy feet, under Thy hands, O Lord of the mountains and the valleys. To-morrow the day will return, the light of the sun will return, and I know not where I shall be. Who is my mother? Who is my father? Thou alone, O God, thou who seest me, thou who defendest me, along my journey in the darkness which is above me, and in every hindrance which thou canst remove from me, O my God, O my Lord, O Lord of the mountains and of the valleys! I say what I think, but do thou pardon, O Lord, do thou forget my mistakes.

> O, Lord (prays the Galla of North Africa) thou hast made me pass the day in peace; let me pass the night in peace also. No one else is more powerful than thou; there is no power outside thee; thou alone hast no duties; in thy hands I pass the day; in thy hands I pass the night; thou art my mother and thou art my father, O Lord.

The Jesuit Smet[19] relates that he had seen an Indian who, having lost something that he greatly valued, suddenly sent up to the Great Spirit the following prayer:

> O Great God, thou who seest all things and takest away all things and soothest all distress, grant, I pray, that I may find that which I seek. (And he added) Nevertheless thy will be done.

A long prayer of the Galles, which begins with a petition, ends also with similar words of submission and resignation of a purely religious character:

> A single bad man has driven away the others from their home; he has scattered women and children like a flock of turkeys, the murderous enemy has snatched the curly-headed child from his mother's arms and strangled him. Why, O Lord, hast thou permitted all this? Thou knowest, thou who hast allowed the seed to grow for us. . . . All comes from thy hands, and why hast thou permitted it? thou alone knowest.
>
> Thou, O innocent Dyambe (prays the Duala) thou knowest all. Thou knowest my name, knowest where I am and hearest me.

I do not think I need quote other examples to enable the reader to be convinced of the presence of strictly religious sentiments even among uncivilized peoples. Nor will it be difficult, I hope, to recognize that prayer, as it proceeds in its develop-

[19] Cf. P. J. de Smet, *Life, Letters and Travels*, New York, 1905.

ment, is continually struggling between a magical and a religious phase, so that at every stage of its development one comes across its approximation to exorcism and the formulae of incantation on the one hand and on the other its rise to purely religious sentiments.

Even in the ancient Egyptian civilization, where, as we have seen, the magician threatens Osiris with destruction, one can hear the voice of the worshiper saying:

> "O Great God, Lord of all truth, to thee I came to contemplate thy blessedness, I have known thee, I have always spoken the truth, take away my faults, I have not lied before the judgment-seat of truth, I have not had contact with evil."

The same may be said of Zoroastrianism, where side by side with formulae of undoubtedly magical character we have the *Gatha,* songs attributed to Zoroaster himself. The first of these has been called a perfect example of prayer; in fact in all of them is visible the sentiment of love, of justice and of purity of conscience which inspires them. Who does not know the superstition into which the people of Islam has fallen? And yet the prayer which stands at the beginning of the *Koran,* and therefore of Islamism, shows how sometimes the religious seed can remain unfertile, if it has fallen on a barren soil like that of the superstitious African peoples.

> Praise be to God (it reads), Lord of all creatures and most merciful. We adore thee and in thee we seek support. Teach us the right way, as thou hast taught those with whom thou hast been so plenteous in grace.

The religion of the Arab prophet abounds in beautiful prayers and high moral teaching; nor are there lacking in his precepts admonitions to the effect that it is not the formal act of prayer that is meritorious but doing what is just and good.

The atheistic system of Ancient Buddhism seems to exclude

prayer altogether and to limit itself to arid psycho-technics. It would, however, be going too far to assert that from the first days of its development it has been altogether ignorant of prayer. As prayer is essential to religion the religious soul tends toward it naturally even where the religious system seems to exclude it. This becomes evident in the irrational phase of religion or its substitute struggles for inclusion in the forms of worship. Something, in fact, that closely resembles prayer is shown by the Buddhist monks in their spiritual exercises, when they seek to flood their souls with love for all living things and to cultivate those feelings of brotherhood which, spreading out in all directions, may to some extent take the place of prayer.

Carlo Formichi, when dealing with prayer in Ancient Buddhism,[20] quotes some words attributed to Buddha himself in which this state of prayer is described.

> When I have returned from giving alms (Buddha is reported to have said) I betake myself to the woods. Here I make a pile of grass and leaves and seat myself with my legs crossed, keeping my body straight from the ribs upward and surrounding my head with wakeful thought as with a halo. I remain in that attitude while I make the force of love which fills my thought spread first into one quarter of the sky, then into a second, a third and a fourth, then upward and downward, crosswise and in every direction; and thus through the whole world I make to spread in all its fullness that force of love which fills my thought, and which is wide, large, boundless, which knows not hate, which cannot feel desire for intrigue.

To prove the need of prayer that exists, as I have already said, deep in the human heart, Formichi says elsewhere that according to the Buddhistic tradition Buddha himself during his lifetime allowed his disciples to recite forms of words that were

[20] Cf. *La Preghiera nel Buddhismo,* in *"Bilychnis,"* Rome, 1924, Vol. XXIII.

really prayers. These were called *parittâs,* or formulae designed to protect the community from possible dangers.[21] In the *Milinda Panha* a list is given of at least six *parittâs* that were issued by Buddha himself. In the Buddhist system, as we shall see more clearly later on, man looks to himself for everything. Knowledge (*jñâna*) on the one hand, the religious life (*carya*) on the other, lead him to the supreme illumination of his mind (*bodhi*). Man is the maker of his own destiny, the absolute master of his will, and as such he would seem not to have any need for prayer. But such confidence in his own strength is not of long duration; for he feels at every step his own weakness and with every movement comes up against the barriers which limit his power, his dominion. Hence his resort to faith and devotion (*bhakti*) and to his *parittâs.*

The Buddhism known as Mahayana, which arose in the first century after Christ, would never have proved victorious in Bactriana, Burma, Siam, Tibet, China and Japan, if it had not opened the doors of its temples to an infinite number of Bodhisattva, or Genii, which are supposed to come to the earth to benefit the world—Genii which from the heaven which they inhabit listen to the invocations and prayers of men.

Man does not long remain quiet under a heaven deaf to prayer; and when in Asia, in course of time, Buddha was spoken of under the name of Amitâbha he had already himself become an object of worship and of prayer. Here are some stanzas of two mahâyânic hymns which have comforted the hearts of millions of Asiatics. The first runs:

> The evil that I have found means to do by love or by hate, or under the influence of infatuation, with body, word or thought—all this evil I repudiate. And with all the good that has succeeded in filling the world of the living . . . with all the good that novices and perfected saints, heroes that have been through the school . . . and heroes

[21] *Parittâ* is a word formed from the preposition *pari* and the root *trâ*="to protect," and signifies a means of protection.

that have not been through the school, have been able to accomplish—with all that good I exalt myself within me. And to all those Buddhas who, like lamps of the world in all the cardinal points, awaking to the highest knowledge, set themselves free from all tyranny of the senses—to those Buddhas, my protectors, I pray. . . . And of all the Buddhas who long to reveal their blessedness I make entreaty with my hands clasped, thus: for ages and ages . . . ah! may ye be able to persevere for the salvation and happiness of the entire world of the living. . . . And all the beings that are scattered over the ten cardinal points, may they ever be happy and without sickness; may the whole world of living beings attain with ease the goal of virtue and see their hopes fulfilled. Redeemed from doing (evil), from the passion and the way of Mâra, may I be able to pass to my cosmic journeyings pure as the lotus which the water does not touch, pure as the sun and the moon, which the air does not taint. And may it be granted me to live (in my future existences) with all the companions of my religious life. May I with them consecrate myself, in body, word and thought, to the pious aspirations of a life in common. . . . And as far as the air reaches, as far as life extends, as far as work and passion can lead, thither may my pious aspiration reach. . . . And when I struggle in the agony of death, may I, with all hindrances removed, be able to see before me Amitâbha and enter the kingdom of his blessedness. And may it be granted that the pious aspirations (which I here express) as soon as they have arrived yonder, shall return to my consciousness; so that, fulfilling all of them, without exception, I may be able to carry yonder too salvation to all creatures that are in the world.

The other hymn is that of the great poet Cântideva, who flourished in the seventh century A. D. It emphasizes the tendency to make the religious merit of the individual contribute to the benefit of others and to make faith and devotion to the

Bodhisattva powerfully reënforce the intellectual and moral efforts of man, so that he may obtain not only his own salvation but also that of the world of living things.

> By virtue of my merits (says this hymn), may the damned be enabled to have the joy of seeing Samantabhadra and the other Bodhisattva, as clouds which shed rain and raise delicious, cooling, fragrant breezes. May the burning tortures of the damned cease! May all who are subjected to a malign destiny be enabled to obtain release from it. May animals cease to devour one another. . . . May the blind regain the sight of their eyes, may the deaf hear, and women bear children without pain. . . . Health to the sick, liberty to the prisoners, strength to the weak, mutual affection towards all men. . . . May sailors be able to put their plans into action, return happily to port and rejoice with their kinsfolk. . . . May the Genii watch over those who sleep, over the mad, the distracted, the forsaken, the weak and the old in the perils of sickness and the wilds. May men be able always to be free from offenses, gifted with faith, wisdom, compassion. . . . By virtue of my merits may all living beings, without exception, turn from evil and always practice the good. May all creatures live happily a life that never ends; may they be eternally happy and may the word death at length disappear. May the earth everywhere be without gravel and other roughness, smooth as the palm of the hand, and loaded with precious stones.

In modern Buddhism it is the image of the Enlightened One that inspires prayer; and in those very countries where Buddhism has not a chance of living in its original purity, because obliged to mix with animistic and magical superstitions, there are not wanting here and there spots of light thrown by the soul that prays, as in the famous prayer to the thirty-five merciful Buddhas.

Chinese prayer, even after the invasion of Buddhism, cannot attain to the hymn of a deeply-stirred religious soul but

has a strong tendency to keep the character of magical invocation, adjuration, or even eudaemonistic prayer. In a country in which the popular taoistic beliefs have not yet been able to acquire enough energy to overcome the traditions of exorcism and magic, and in which Confucian prayer itself persistently remains cold, measured and impersonal, the meditation of Buddhism, instead of being the leaven for higher forms of prayer, as in the Upanishads, had to sink to the level of the lower forms of superstition. Yet G. Tucci, who has recently been studying Chinese prayer, has translated one which may certainly be taken as an example of pure religious feeling—an example which is all the more surprising because it is found side by side with the kind of superstitions in which a nation finds satisfaction only in periods of religious decadence. He quotes a popular song, which says:

> Princes and ministers do not help me. Father, mother, ancestors—how can ye endure to see me (in such a condition)? The drought is extraordinarily serious. Mountains and rivers are dry. The demon of heat is cruel. He seems to burn, to scorch. My heart fears his wrath. My aching heart seems aflame. All the princes, the ministers refuse to hear me. O, majestic heaven, supreme ruler. Grant me a way of escape.

This popular song is characteristic as indicating a religious conviction that none of the powers of the earth is capable of freeing the people from the wicked powers which threaten them, from the demon of drought that is so cruel. We find direct religious inspiration also in the prayer of Chwangtze, which, although it is not directed to any god with personal attributes and characteristics, does not ask favors or gifts, does not invoke aid, does not crave forgiveness, yet is the stirring expression of that more intimate and profound religion which no words have yet succeeded in describing adequately. As Tucci says, in the solemn vision of a sunrise or a sunset or the mysterious poise of the circling universe there arises in minds that are deeply religious

an ineffable harmony of mystic sweetness, together with a vague aspiration toward a supreme order of things—an order that we can only dimly know, but the presence of which in everything stands out more clearly for us than the truths that are mathematically more certain.[22]

We find similar prayers in India in the *Upanishads* and also in the unofficial religious life of the Egyptians of the Graeco-Roman period, which some recently discovered private letters reveal to us in its frankest and most intimate thoughts about religion. We also find them in the Greek mysteries and the Oriental cults of the time that just preceded the adoption of Christianity in Rome,[23] where religious devotion is found side by side with magic and incantation.

To-day Parseeism prescribes practices which betray their magical origin, such as lustral purifications and cleaning the teeth before prayer. In Islamism the *salat*, which has to take place five times a day and at fixed hours, is recited in Arabic, i.e. in the sacred language, and with the face turned toward the city of the Prophet. The so-called inspired prophecy and magic are also to-day as widely spread among Islamic races, and amulets continue to hold as much or almost as much place in their religious life as in the temples of Mahomet. In the Shintoism of to-day animals, which at one time were worshiped, have now descended to the rank of companions of the gods; but they have not yet disappeared from the Japanese Olympus. The Shinto ritual rigidly adheres to the very ancient practice of magical lustration before prayer, and amulets are as frequently employed in modern Japan as in Spain, Portugal and South Italy. The Shintoist willingly lets the priest pray for him, but he avails himself also of magic art, knowing well that it is not to the priest but to the magician that he must go for help.

In Jainism the Digambara sect has special religious obligations which dispense with the psycho-technics of meditation of the

[22] Cf. Giuseppe Tucci, *La Preghiera nella Cina*, in "*Bilychnis*," Rome, 1925.
[23] Cf. Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions*, in *Roman Paganism*, Open Court, Chicago, 1911.

Jainist monk, and tend, like the Buddhist monk, to empty the consciousness of everything so as to reach Nirvana in the next existence. The ascetics and the laity of Sthanakava, another sect of the Jainists, have no temple or images, but they are required every day, before the rising of the sun, to say a prayer. This prayer, if said by the laity, may not last less than a certain time, which is fixed at forty-eight minutes. Several other practices similar to this show that in Jainism the spiritual or educational aim of the sacred action has been lost sight of in the effort to make its efficacy depend upon the conditions under which it is performed.[24]

Present day Buddhism in Ceylon, Burma and Siam celebrates birth and death with prayers which savor more of sorcery than of religion. Here the reading of sacred texts is adopted as an infallible means of keeping off all bad spirits and freeing souls from hell. In Chinese Buddhism too, notably in the Langhua sect, when there is not sufficient time to say long prayers, there is a simple invocation of the name of Amida, it being considered that this, like the reading of certain passages of the Sutra will be sufficient to secure the desired effect.[25] So too a simple reading of Buddhist texts or of some passages of the Veda, the Bible or the Koran—books that had originally quite another function—has become, not only in Africa, but also in India, in Europe and America an effective substitute for prayer. The function assigned to the reading of the sacred texts—that of freeing the living from wicked spirits and the dead from their chastisement—is as common in European and American Christianity as among the Buddhists of Siam and of Burma.

When this reading or the mere invocation of a name becomes a purely mechanical act there soon follows the invention of counters, for countng up the repetition of words by units, tens and hundreds; also the writing of prayers and invocations on revolving wheels, which can obtain their effect even if they are only turned by passers-by on their way into the temples of

[24] Cf. A. Guérinot, *La Religion Sjana*, Paris, 1926.
[25] Cf. C. Clemen, *Die Nichtchristliche Kulturreligionen*, Leipzig, 1921.

Tibet or Mongolia; or, simpler still, writing the prayers on ribbons and little flags, trusting to the wind to blow them. It is a characteristic practice to write prayers on small leaves, which are then chewed and fastened on the faces of the idols—an evidence of how the effect of prayer can be made to depend, not on the meaning which it can properly express, but on the magical act which is supposed to render it effective.

To follow the history of prayer, then, from its origin up to our day means to follow its oscillation from a magical phase to a religious phase—to follow the continual alternation of these phases. This can find its explanation in the vital impulse, which supplies a stimulus for the creation both of magic, as a means to power, and of religion as a means to victory over evil. Immanent and alive in both is the experience of the numinous, as is also the belief in powers on whose activity human welfare in a measure depends, belief in men who can thwart or overcome the adverse powers, and in the practices which depend on belief in the men.

But if we do not allow to either one or the other a priority in time we must at any rate clearly distinguish magic from religion, and likewise incantation from prayer; we must distinguish them as *cultured* forms which, though they have in common some impulses that gave them birth and direction, yet are essentially different. One does not develop from the other, nor is this contained, even in embryo, in that. They are not both governed by the same laws of progress, since, while magic remains the same at all times and in all races (like the habits of the lower grades of animal life or the games of children), religion becomes different and progresses. The different nature of magic and religion may also be inferred from the amoral attitude of the latter.[26] This does not involve any contradiction, since magic and incantation are consciously associated with an immoral life, while the knowledge that the act is immoral is equivalent to denying its religious character.

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[26] Cf. M. Puglisi, *Il Problema morale nelle religioni primitive*, Roma, 1915.

Those modern scholars therefore, who, like Frazer, have maintained the priority of a period of magic to a period of religion, or the priority of incantation to prayer, with the consequent derivation of the latter from the former, have not realized that in so doing they have irretrievably broken down the bridges that might enable us to arrive at a knowledge of the origin of religion. For, even if it were true that in Australia one finds any number of magicians and no priest, this would merely mean that in that country the transition from magic to religion must spring out of the unknown. This must in fact, be Frazer's conclusion; for while maintaining that religion arose when the great discovery was made of the inefficacy of magic he can give no explanation of the origin of religion, thus commiting the same error as David Hume, who confuses the cause with that which precedes, without taking account of whether or not it practically contains within itself that which follows.

When man saw, says J. G. Frazer, that what he had taken for causes were not causes, and that all his efforts to extract benefits for them were fanciful and vain, he had recourse to religion. But where man found religion, Frazer does not tell us. Moreover this hypothesis not only does not explain how religion was born but it does not explain how magic persists and why it is so widely spread to-day. The fact is that it might with more reason than any Church appeal to the proud motto: *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, as the surest guarantee of its infallibility. The most that the hypothesis of Frazer might explain would be the end of magic; it could not explain the origin of religion; much less could it explain the relations that take place between those two forms of activity of the spirit.

But since religion is almost always associated with magic; since there is a frequent transition, even in the very act of worship, from prayer to exorcism or incantation and vice-versa; since in a primitive stage of religion such transition is more frequent and in other degrees of culture there is oscillation between magical and religious rites, people have tried to draw

the conclusion that in prayer one has to do with a mere development of what was virtually contained in incantation. Since, however, incantation and prayer alternated and persisted in the same act of worship and also throughout the course of the history of religion, one might with better reason draw the conclusion that one merely had to do with two phases of the same liturgical act.

In reality the word of exorcism and the gesture of magic enter into religious worship from the very first and are associated with it so intimately as to appear at first sight to obliterate the lines of demarcation between religion and magic, between the ritual of exorcism and incantation and that of prayer, and one has to penetrate deep down into the religious consciousness in order to discover them. One has to bear in mind that prayer carries conviction not only because of the efficacy of its content, because of the thoughts that are expressed in it, but also because of itself. This is a nice point, to which the historians of prayer ought to have paid more attention. The act of prayer carries with it, simply as an act of prayer, an impression of efficacy which is quite distinct from any question of its content or of the forces that are derived from the physical world, and it is precisely the belief in this efficacy which causes prayer to be transformed straight away into an act of incantation.

There is no doubt that, as A. Loisy[27] has aptly remarked, the uncultured man instinctively believes that he puts into his words not only his thoughts, but also another element, that of the ideas and the things which his words represent; and that is the reason why primitive prayers can more easily change into formulae of incantation. But although in such cases it is far from easy to distinguish prayer from incantation yet the two activities are clearly differentiated by the magic force which, in the former case is supposed to be set in motion by the rite. R. Kreglinger[28] remarks that to this magic force, as to the *mana*, is sometimes

[27] Cf. *La Religion*, Paris, 1924.

[28] Cf. *Les Primitifs*, Paris, 1919; id. *L'Evolution religieuse de l'Humanité*, Paris, 1926.

attributed an initiative which presupposes conscience and will.

When the sacred word acquires value because of its outward form and not because of its inner content, when prayer acquires value because of the sound and the gesture which gives expression to it and solely because of them, it has, like any other occult force, become personified. It may be remembered that Brahmasoati, the greatest of the Indian gods, is really simply prayer. The belief in its magic power brought about the miracle of personification. And thus, while in the Rigveda prayer is considered as a proof of the gods' existence, in due course it was actually personified and regarded as being the source of their existence. Brahman is now, as a matter of fact, the neutral name used to designate the supreme Power, of which the popular deities are only forms and manifestations; while originally it had only the meaning of magic power, the magical efficacy that resided in ritual prayer and in sacrifice.[29]

But in order to test whether we have to do with prayer or with incantation all we need do is to appeal on every occasion not so much to the personal or impersonal conception of the object of worship as to the attitude of mind of the worshiper. Incantation is based entirely on the efficacy of the gesture and the words, an efficacy that depends exclusively on the act itself and the precise way in which it is performed. If the rite is correctly carried out, the consequences should be infallible. But as soon as the efficacy of prayer is made to rest upon the real meaning of the words rather than on some infallible hidden virtue in them; when its success is ascribed not to the precision of execution but to a moral order which transcends the limits of individual and temporary endaemonistic interests; when, in other words, prayer is taken to mean not only, as Socrates said to Euthyphron, asking, or to put it more strongly, demanding, something from the gods, but an uplifting, an abasement, a giving, an offering of oneself—then we undoubtedly have before us the transition from the magical to the religious phase,

[29] Cf. A. S. Pringle-Patterson, *Prayer and Sacrifice as a Commentary on Man's Ideas of God*, in the "Hibbert Journal," London, Vol. XXIV, 1926.

the transition from the mechanical to the teleological meaning. That, I repeat, is not always observed, at any rate not from external signs. The simplest invocation may have now a religious now a magical side. When the natives of West Africa in the hour of need and of peril call upon the old father, Paia Nyambe, or the natives of Burma beg their supreme god, Karaikasang, to cast his eyes upon them because they are innocent and they are not cheating or lying; when the Kaffirs ask for help from the old father Tixus, calling upon his name alone, or the ancient Prussians cry out amid the storm: "O thou god Perkun, save us"; when the old Athenian beseeches: ὗσον, ὗσον, ὦ φῖλε Ζεῦ, κατὰ τὰς ἀρούρας τὰς τῶν Αθηναίων (send rain, send rain, beloved Zeus, upon the fields of the Athenians), or the African Kiziba calls upon the father, the spirit of the sun, to make it rise upon the horizon; when the initiate in the Eleusinian cult exclaims: ὖε κύε; or the old Roman warrior calls: *Mars, vigila*— one has a right to assume that, as their invocation corresponds to a real trouble or an appeal to the Supreme Power, their inner attitude is an attitude of prayer.

When Jesus at Gethsemane calls simply upon *"Abba"* and on the cross calls upon *"Eloi"*; when St. Francis of Assisi is heard praying all through the night: "My God, My All"; we know that we cannot but ascribe to these invocations a deeply religious character, although in their outward form the actual invocations are not different from those others upon which we are bound to suspend judgment until it is shown by some clearer indications whether we are dealing with formulae of incantation or with prayers.

As the advance and systematization of knowledge enables us gradually to assign to magic cults their place in the religion of superstitions, and as the religious consciousness comes to a clearer and clearer realization of its own nature, the magical phases and formulae of incantation become detached from the general framework of religious beliefs and actions, although they still leave some trace behind. In the most advanced religions we find such formulae used, without any attempt at conceal-

ment, against evil spirits. But these magical phases, into which the spirit frequently relapses, are not separated so clearly from religious worship; and therefore we must combine historical with psychological considerations if we desire, on each occasion, to discover when the worshiper falls into the magical phase or rises into the religious phase.

In any case the theory that incantation preceded or was transformed into prayer, or that magic as it developed was converted into religion must be definitely abandoned. This hypothesis, says F. B. Jevons,[30] finds as little support in the instances furnished by the science of religion as does the opposite theory of a primitive revelation, or a state of paradise, in which alone pure religion was known. If we find something in a given stage of evolution, the capacity for it must have existed in the preceding stages. Therefore where we find prayer or incantation, magic or religion, we must admit its potential existence in an earlier stage, and instead of denying the one or the other in the interests of a preconceived theory we ought to recognize the potentialities of each—the potentiality of the will to obtain power over adverse forces and at the same time the potentiality of the will to rise to higher forms of life.

What we find, therefore, preceding the appearance of prayer and incantation, is potentiality, not absence of those specific elements which differentiate these two activities. In prayer there is no bargain, no injunction, no compulsion: in its purest forms, so far from limiting itself to a request it transforms itself into a gift. For this reason it has even been called an internal sacrifice,[31] and has sometimes been confused, at any rate in its earlier stages, with the very sacrifice which it was intended to accompany.

In this connection Alfred Loisy[32] mentions that the ritual formulary Arunta and Loritja, which has been published by

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[30] Cf. *The Idea of God in Early Religions*, Cambridge, 1910.
[31] Cf. R. Müller-Freienfels, *Psychologie der Religion*, Berlin, 1920.
[32] Cf. *Le Sacrifice*, Paris, 1920.

Strehlow, does not contain a line of invocation but simply descriptive lines related to a liturgical action and intended to supplement it. Among rather more advanced tribes, such as the Australians, invocation may be associated with the descriptive element, but all the same the formula retains its magical and restrictive character. The sacred songs of the Aztecs, for example, were, as far as we can judge, descriptive and closely related to the sacred action and its ritual movements; but in those sacred songs it is not possible for us to discover any traces of invocations which might be classed as prayers.

These considerations, however, when brought into relation with the question of the priority of sacrifice to prayer, do not permit us, at any rate on the data here given, to assume the priority of the rite of incantation to prayer. The question of the priority of sacrifice is linked with that of the priority of gesture over words; and considered from this point of view sacrifice can only be viewed as a rudimentary form of prayer, or on the other hand a reënforcement of it. It must indeed contain a prayer, if only in germ. For to offer and to desire, even in silence, is to pray. And while the gesture which has a purpose may be called a silent prayer the opposite cannot be maintained, because prayer is not always accompanied by gesture or by sacrifice. In fact we have here an unilateral inseparability, which proves praver to be independent of sacrifice but not the reverse.

One may therefore repeat with regard to prayer the old phrase: "In the beginning was the word." For behind the elementary form of religious worship stands the pious intention expressed frequently, but not always, in words, words being the simplest, the most universally available means of communicating with the higher powers and expressing the thought implied in sacrifice. But I do not think other examples are needed to show that, in this matter also, we are dealing with different processes created by the same impulse, guided by the same experience and brought into religious forms which correspond to particular interpretations of the unseen world and the spe-

cific emotions which produce them. Prayer does not owe its origin to incantation or to a sacrificial formula, and in the various stages of its development it is not changed qualitatively into incantation or inner sacrifice, except in the inner purposes of the worshiper.[33] It is through these purposes that the alternation arises by which it hovers between the magical and the religious phase. But with every fresh step that is taken in the historical and psychological investigation of the most advanced religions, with every fresh discovery in the field of the religious life of primitive minds, fresh testimony arises to the blending of incantation with prayer. Rarely does one find, in a higher civilization, anyone who is content merely with magical beliefs and actions; equally rare is it to find a religious consciousness that is not touched with superstition, especially in a period of decadence. More rarely still does one find prayer dissociated from words and gestures, since it is in reality a combination of word and action. And prayer becomes deeper and fuller when it attains to a harmony of nature with man, of spirit with form, when it attains to a harmony of the individual with the community, of the external world with the internal—a harmony that it must in some way realize if it is to fulfill its task.

[33] An accurate piece of research on the subject of Christian prayer as sacrifice has recently been carried out by Hans Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, Bonn, 1926.

CHAPTER VI

Personal Prayer and Institutional Prayer

In the collective effort which associates men in a common destiny and stamps upon them the seal of a common ideal, and consequently of common practices and religious aspirations, prayer—which is, as we have seen, essentially and originally an expression of individual needs, a function of a universal impulse toward life, enlightened by intuition of the Divine—is not slow to become also an expression of the needs of the community and hence one of its sacred activities, an essential aspect of collective and institutional worship. After it has risen and developed in the depths of consciousness with its rational and irrational factors, after it has struggled between a magical and a religious phase, we see prayer under an aspect which is now distinctly individual and now collective, because both the vital impulse itself and the conditions of its existence lead the worshiper to work out his religious activity within the two only possible spheres of individuality and collectivity.

We have seen how man before giving himself up to the free exercise of his mental activities and his speculative interests, has been obliged, often against the grain, to devote himself to his material existence and thus to put himself into relation with the unseen world under just that form in which he had first learned to know it.

But that is not enough. For just as the baby needs to trust itself to the mother's care to obtain its first nourishment, and to be taught the dangers that it must face at every turn, so primitive man, even if his instincts and social needs had not exercised a powerful influence over him, would have been led, in the

interests of self-preservation and self-development, to profit by the experiences of social life. Here we have the great law of economy of forces, which governs life; and neither the individual nor the community itself can escape from its operation. Man, in fact, has very soon come to realize, even in the bosom of his family (that earliest form of collectivity), the good results which are obtained by trusting to the help of the strongest, the shrewdest, the cleverest, the wisest—has come, in other words to realize the great advantage which can thus be obtained with the minimum effort.

There are strong, almost overpowering, instincts which lead him to paternity and thus to the first nucleus of associated life. This life in its turn opens up for him a plentiful stream of traditions, where the individual can with minimum effort increase his knowledge and his power. In their associated life also he found those remarkable men who were deemed to be in possession of unusual wisdom and of secret powers; in other words he found a means of protection incomparably stronger than any he could have secured by himself. Only in a community do there arise magicians, wizards, enchanters, wonder-workers, clairvoyants, astrologers, medicine men, warriors and priests; and it is in a civilization of a higher level that great military, political and religious institutions are developed. These institutions are the most powerful means that the community can offer for putting to good account the knowledge and the power of individuals, for defending them from enemies visible and invisible, in fact for giving everyone a knowledge of the nature of evil and the power to overcome it and get rid of it.

On its side the associated life requires a special order and discipline, and therefore a rigorous observance of those laws which aim at its own preservation; so that at times the individual seems to disappear and to lose all value whatever, because he is so completely merged in the community. For all members of the collective life speak the same language, are sprung from the same origin or *totem* and must therefore tend to have the same beliefs and the same customs. At a certain primitive stage

the individual is so closely bound, one might almost say enslaved, to the body corporate that he has to abandon every individual step or initiative. Personal property does not yet exist, the earth is cultivated for the benefit of all, responsibility itself is collective; for all the members have to answer for the crime that any individual commits, and guilt extends to the descendants, who, though innocent, have to answer for the sins of their fathers. There are periods in the history when the inflexible custom of the community rules so despotically that although they themselves were the creators of the social laws they have no alternative but to yield absolute submission to them, unless they desire to expose themselves to the most cruel punishments.[1] There could be no more significant illustration of the tragedy of a destiny which meets the lawgiver—a destiny in which he himself becomes the victim of that very tyranny which he evolved for the domination of the body corporate.

This, in brief, is the foundation on which rise those religious institutions which, though maintained by the economy of individual forces and by the interest taken in the defense and development of individuals, gradually come to subject both these and themselves to an iron discipline, which has grown sacred and unapproachable under the form of "tabu," dangerous as a deadly poison.

Like language, however, religious institutions meet an undoubted human need. Originating from a deep vital impulse of the religious consciousness, they proceed, through chaotic and confused experiences and ideas and in the interest of the common life, to build up a body of doctrines and cults which becomes a precious inheritance for the salvation of all—a body of doctrines which is gradually arranged and cleared of its most glaring contradictions; a system of rules of conduct which includes a system of rites and ceremonies; a system destined to serve as the most infallible instrument for the liberation, the salvation, the redemption of the individual and the community.

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[1] Cf. R. Kreglinger, *L'Evolution religieuse de l'Humanité*, Paris, 1926.

One can thus readily understand that institutional religion takes its place at the very center of life and is enthroned as supreme ruler in the kingdom of the spirit. It represents man's greatest guarantee for attaining, with the minimum output of effort, what in his ardent vital impulse he is seeking for, and offers him as the goal of his efforts the vision of an ineffable blessedness. Nothing could be more potent and seductive.

Even when the individual consciousness has not a clear vision of intellectual, ethical and aesthetic values, the religious institution supplies a wisdom which removes ignorance and error; it supplies rules adapted for getting rid of guilt and moral evil in social relations; it supplies the aid of the arts and of psycho-technics for attaining that state of ecstasy which is the fullness of the divine spirit. Religious institutions had only to organize these ideas and experiences in order to take a more important position than military or political institutions. In some phases of their development they have even gone so far as to put themselves at the head of the latter and to make of religion not only an ecclesiastical but also a military and political power. The protecting gods of the state were replaced by their representatives on earth—holy men, called to lead political and military forces, so that to the respect and veneration which they inspired because of the unseen forces which were thought to be under their control there was added the fear that the warrior and the tyrant inspire.

It can readily be understood why the first written prayers are found only under religious institutions and orthodox faiths. History can deal only with traditional prayers, those that have left more or less marked traces on their path. The history of prayer, therefore, can rightly be described as the history of institutional prayer. It includes both individual and collective prayers but the latter appear more frequently than the former. This is not because among primitive tribes that necessity never arose which drives the individual, under the stress of his personal needs, to pray spontaneously, but because such prayer is always a sporadic occurrence which often eludes observation and leaves no trace.

If such trace is to be left the religious institution—usually the only direct subject of the historian—must also draw up, as Christianity, for example, does, individual prayers for private worship. Even these, however, are usually collected and set out in books of prayer intended for public worship, thus reducing to the very minimum the attempts of individuals to draw them up freely on their own account. By the side of collective prayer, therefore, there is frequently found individual prayer which the religious institutions have recognized but have not left to stand alone, having usually prescribed the words, or the methods, or the season, or the times for using it.

But individual prayer acquires a strictly personal character when it flows spontaneously from the religious consciousness, when it responds to a felt need. It may be included in the ritual of a church or religious institution, because one cannot say that even here prayer does not rise from a definite religious need; but it will always be distinct from a prayer that is repeated merely because it is written in a book, carved on marble or engraved on altars or columns, and it will live on imperishably side by side with such ritual prayer. It is this private prayer which springs directly from the actions and thoughts of our life. It is not always put into words, it does not always derive support from institutional rites, it does not always accompany them; but it is at the heart of the religious spirit and it may in a sense be said that it forms its language. Unheard, it makes itself felt in the heart as a slight tremor, a throb of joy or grief; present in every act of life it breathes like a perfume and it moves as though rising on mighty invisible wings. The spirit that knows it will be able to pass through the radiant light of triumph and the darkness of pain with an unbroken sense of rest and peace in the heart. If the life of the great religious geniuses, if the life of the saints may be called a constant yearning after God, it is because their life is one constant prayer. If their spirit is full of God it is because prayer is its very life. Jesus prays all night long, and so does Francis of Assisi. Luther

prays at least three hours a day, Ignatius Loyola seven. Tersteegen said: "Thy constant occupation from morning till evening should be to pray." That does not strictly mean meditating all day in prayer and keeping away from the duties which social life requires one to perform. It means living, as Emerson suggests, in a continual state of prayer, so that in every act of life the divine spirit may be present, without ever overwhelming the consciousness of the man who knows that each one of his smallest acts has indefinite repercussions on history, and that he himself is nothing more nor less than a ray of the divine thought.

The prayer of the community corresponds to the grouping together of religious experiences and ideas that at first were not combined. This is not evident when the chief prays for the whole tribe, when the holy man, or the one who is considered to have most authority, expresses the feelings of the masses. In the family it is the father, as among the Ruanda, who prays to the redeemer Ryancombe in the name of his children. Among the native Mkulwe in Western Africa it is also the father who prays to the gods on behalf of all. In oligarchies it is the old men who usually pray, and where the religious functions are in the hands of the priests it is they who pray in the name and on behalf of the community. With the Wedda in Ceylon the Shamans have the power needed for calling up the spirits of the dead. With the Ewe in West Africa prayers are said by the priest, as in the *Iliad*, where he is called simply ἀρητὴρ, the one who prays. Then all that those present have to do is to follow and take part mentally, or sometimes with words, which in certain rituals such as the Jewish or Christian are specially written down.

The prayer of the ancient Hebrew prophets and psalmists lays stress not so much on the individual personality as on the people of God, the sacred community. Jeremiah is the only exception, and it is perhaps for this reason that Cornill considers him the first man recorded in religious history as having prayed, while Wellhausen adds that he is the father of true

prayer, since had it not been for him the Psalms would never have been written.

But it is in the prayer of Jesus that the supreme sense of personal intimacy is reached. In Christianity personal prayer appears side by side with liturgical prayer, though not mixed up with it. Liturgical prayer was, it is true, unknown to Jesus, but it held an important position in the Christian community. No doubt in these liturgical prayers attention is often paid too much to the hours when they should be said and the position which the worshiper should assume, rather than to the real religious needs of the heart; and it might therefore appear at first sight that in early Christianity liturgical prayer completely supplanted personal prayer. But a closer examination shows that Christian liturgical prayer was from the very beginning a thanksgiving for a redemption and a petition for the coming of the kingdom. One may also say that in early Christian prayer, as in the old synagogue prayers, no trace is found of formalism and conventionalism, prayer being for the early Christian essentially a part of his personal life. What remained the same for all was the general content, the framework and the terminology. Jesus had given the pattern for all prayer, for with him it was a constant communion with the Heavenly Father. The Christian prayer of the first three centuries—as for example the prayer of St. Stephen, St. Paul, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp and St. Cyprian—is couched in simple Bible language and is both soteriological and eschatological, a prayer for salvation and for the coming of the Lord, for the brethren and for the churches; and what is true of the prayer of the community is true also of that of the individual.

If we follow up the traces of the source of these two aspects of Christian prayer, it will be found that the personal aspect starts its growth with Jeremiah and the sacerdotal or liturgical aspect with Moses. The Psalms are only a poetical paraphrase of the great personal prayer of Jeremiah, an ideal that afterwards attained its fulfillment in Jesus. St. Paul is linked up to institutional prayer on the one hand and on the other to the personal prayer of a mysticism which has Christ as its object,

that is, which clings to a personal communion with the heavenly Christ conceived as the Lord and Savior of individual souls.

This personal character of prayer, this continual communion with the Heavenly Father, for which Jesus had set the example, is found again later in St. Augustine and from him passes to St. Anselm of Canterbury, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis of Assisi, Gertrude of Helftä, St. Bonaventura, and Thomas à Kempis; and its dynamic force leaps over the boundaries of the Catholic Church to enter and possess the souls of Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, Calvin and lastly Tersteegen, the most noble mystic, perhaps, who has ever appeared on evangelical soil.

Greater fixity than that displayed in the beginnings of Christian prayer began to show itself toward the middle of the third century. Prayer then entered upon a second period and became complicated and corrupted by Graeco-Roman culture. The flowers of religious expression grew through this contact more gorgeous and magnificent—witness St. Augustine and St. Jerome, who with all the wealth of their talent and humanistic culture clothe prayer in robes of splendor. But this new current of culture, far from strengthening the position of the liturgy, began to make a breach between personal prayer and institutional prayer.

The contrast is seen most clearly in the case of the leading spirits. Their mystic exaltation cannot be followed by the great mass, who become differentiated from them not only by their numbers but by their quality. This led to the establishment of extra-liturgical prayer, of verbal prayer, and left the original yearning for salvation, which had gradually become weaker in the hearts of men as they became further removed from the eschatological and apocalyptic visions, to find its lasting embodiment within the Church.

St. Augustine, who succeeded in combining the passion of the Psalms with the depth and purity of neoplatonic speculation, has come to acquire greater importance than St. Paul in the history of Christian prayer. Heiler and Fendt, in fact, do not hesi-

tate to call him the father of Christian prayer. St. Francis of Assisi recalls the accents of St. Augustine and St. Bernard, while Bernard of Clairvaux, Henry Seuse and Matthew Grünwald add to them a new touch of mysticism. One may say that the Middle Ages traced the lines within which Christian prayer was henceforth to develop, for since that time nothing really new has appeared.

By the fifth century we find that fixed and rigid formulae have become general everywhere. A few choice souls are able to break free from them. Savonarola, for instance, during his imprisonment, passes from a Bernardian mysticism to purely evangelical prayer. Luther, too, breaks with mediaeval mysticism and puts in its place that of early Christianity. Personal prayer then becomes an ecstatic sinking of the self in God—the Highest Good. But the period that follows the Reformation is marked by a mixture of opposing tendencies, although the dominant feature is still the intermittent appearance of mediaeval traditionalism on a background of popular pietism. Generally speaking the period that follows the Reformation is characterized by a marked deviation from the lines laid down by the liturgy.

Toward the close of the sixteenth century the mystical Augustinian motive resumes its sway and in Catholicism stress is laid on inward personal prayer, the prayer of Jesus and of St. Theresa, a prayer without words, a peaceful union of the soul with God. But what is most characteristic in the history of Christian prayer at this time is the loss of its impressive unity, which is now replaced by a number of different ideas and sensations. Just as the impressive unity of the Gothic temple becomes broken up into a number of little altars, so popular religious feeling becomes specialized and substitutes for the adoration of God a concentration on special objects of worship, such as the childhood and passion of Christ, his five wounds, his head covered with blood and wounds, his heart and even his name. This may be called the period of the specialization of Christian prayer. While this breaking up into special objects of worship was always regarded by the great mediaeval geniuses

as a symbol, it becomes after the Reformation a disruptive movement, until the development of the Eucharistic worship sets itself once more to focus and fix Christian prayer on the fundamental conception of "the Church".[2]

It is in collective institutional prayer that the Church is specially interested, though such prayer is at the same time a personal expression of the inner religious needs of the individual. Prayer is essentially a promoter of union and it never discharges this function so clearly as in collective prayer, which enables individuals to share their experience of union with the Divine. Stirred by a single emotion, striving toward one goal, the human brotherhood never shows itself more alive or more inspired than in that collective prayer which joins great numbers of men in a sacred bond. We need only recall the Jewish communities at the time of the exile or those of the Maccabaeans or those of early Christianity and the Christian communities that came after them. "We are all one body," says St. Paul[3] and no expression could give more effectively that sense of a community permeated with lofty divine emotion. In the striking words of Goethe:

> Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt,
> Eins in dem andern wirkt und lebt.

History shows us common prayer in its evolution from the patriarchal, tribal and national God to the universal God, and the Church takes this evolution as the basis for public worship. Its psychological justification lies in the emotional contact, in the identity of the relationships and of the purposes which the community has as regards the Divine. The suggestion of the individual often exercises an important influence by means of the group. Prayer in common is a social act which puts the different individuals in a position to feel the identity of their relationships with the Divine and therefore in a position to

[2] Cf. Philipp Funk, *Die Geschichtlichen Stufen des christlichen Gebetes* in "*Die Tat*," April, 1921.
[3] Cf. I Cor. X.17; Tertullian, *Apologetic*, XXXIX.

attain to a wider experience than any that could be found within the compass of any one individual's life taken singly. In order to attain this end prayer in common must be able to lift the individual to a higher level, must be able, as it were, to raise his religious potential. Like the prayer of the mystic which becomes aflame with meditation and contemplation (that nearest approximation to true prayer) collective prayer can succeed in gradually approximating the individual to a state higher than that of personal prayer.

Collective or institutional prayer must not, however, be confused or identified with empty formalism or magic. This would be equivalent to failing to recognize its psychological meaning and putting in its place the decadent superstructure and the psycho-technics which the history of institutional prayer so often shows us.

The great Italian educator Raffaello Lambruschini, while laying stress upon the educational function of religion, which he considered a most effective means of moral therapeutics, a powerful factor in self-discipline, called attention to the danger that hangs over a community of believers, with whom religious practices, if badly ordered or observed, tend, much to the detriment of their happiness, to produce a feeling of weariness and of repugnance toward all the beautiful and consoling aspects of religion. That was why, in the college-family life of his boys at S. Carbone, he curtailed the opportunity for common prayer in the mornings and the evenings.

> In desiring that prayer should constantly be changed he was guided (writes A. Gámbero[4]) by a high ideal, viz. that prayer, whether at the opening or at the close of the boys' day, should not let the constant living stream of religious feeling be lost in a formula that was conventional and therefore apt to be cold and abstract. He would speak in stirring and impressive tones of its inexhaustible richness,

[4] Cf. Proemio by A. Gámbaro to the *Conferenze religiose e Preghiere*, edited by R. Lambruschini, Venice, 1926.

touching just those notes that responded to the varying moods of their spirit, and thus in the very act of prayer he would awaken and keep alive in them a desire for union with God and a healthy sense of sin.

R. Lambruschini, therefore, although he did not forget that it is only the inner feeling which gives value to common prayer, did not by any means deny the necessity for the latter.

> Are we anxious (he said) that external worship should be reformed? Let us begin by reviving within ourselves the feeling which ought to animate it. Let us not absent ourselves from public worship as though it was something unmeaning and beneath our notice; and on the other hand do not let us attend it from mere habit or from regard for others with distracted minds and cold hearts. Let us look upon it as something important, let us set out with the intention of using these acts of worship for joining with others in stimulating and giving utterance to a sense of religious brotherhood. Let many of us desire this, let us desire it earnestly, and soon we shall see public worship throw off like a ragged and worn out garment all that does not respond to the reawakened evangelical feeling and which is not "worshiping in spirit and in truth." But these dispositions of the soul, which are capable of reanimating and regenerating public worship and public prayer must be cultivated and produced by worship and prayer in the home and above all by the worship and prayer of the heart—by that habitual, serene, free and loving thought about God which floods the whole soul and makes all actions of Christians a continual prayer.[5]

As may be seen from these remarks, there is undoubtedly a tendency in institutional prayer to lose itself in external worship, to pass from a spontaneous movement of the consciousness

[5] Cf. Lambruschini, *Conferenze e Preghiere inedite*, with preface and notes by A. Gámbaro, Venice, 1926.

into a barren formula, to press for uniformity in motives and consequently to lose in intensity and depth in proportion as it gains in breadth. Prayer, which rose from a spontaneous activity of the religious consciousness of the individual or of the community, thus becomes fixed and pinned down to complicated rituals and sacred institutions, finding utterance only in the mechanism of word and gesture and quenching the flame in the individual breast through paying attention not to the personal religious emotions but to the formula laid down by the institution as obligatory. The spontaneous activity of the religious consciousness thus becomes something fixed and sacrosanct, something which it is man's highest duty to maintain in its original completeness. The sense of a living religious community has also become sterilized, and nothing remains but a formula that has been embedded in a liturgy, in the hope that out of it a spark may some day break forth to kindle in the hearts of many souls that sense of religious community from which in the first place it spontaneously broke forth. The individual who in collective prayer had been able to reach with the minimum effort a higher stage of religious feeling, now, through a mechanical and routine repetition, comes to abandon all sense of a personal responsibility, to lose interest in the deep significance of the religious act, or, worse still, to confine the value of prayer exclusively to the external rite.

The consequences are evident; perfunctory attendance at worship, religious boredom. This is why Spencer never wearied in putting his friends on their guard against liturgical formulae. One remembers Bunyan and Fox, who waged war against the *Common Prayer Book*, and Milton, who in his *Iconoclastes* condemned the tyranny that imprisoned in verbal formulae the two freest things in the world—prayer and the Divine Spirit which prompts to prayer, and who, in his *Defensio pro Populo*, compared the Prayer Book to the song of the cuckoo, repeating unceasingly the same note. Schleiermacher, contrasting spontaneous and emotional prayer with the formal and somnolent use

of the liturgy, said "Prayer ought to create its own words." [6] Shakespeare had already written the line:

Words without thoughts never to heaven go,

before A. Sabatier said that what he saw in prayer was a movement of the soul when brought into personal relation, into contact with that mysterious power which is felt before it can be named. For Wm. James, prayer is only intercourse with an ideal companion. Amiel writes, "We dream, we suffer alone, we die alone; but nothing prevents us from opening our solitude to God and turning the dreary monologue into a dialogue." Oliver Lodge understands by prayer something that brings us into communion with the Heavenly Father. In this exaltation of prayer as an individual, personal act, as a unique relationship with God, we find a complete ignoring of collective prayer.

But as against this exaltation of individual and personal prayer there are some authorities who assign a greater value, in fact a sort of "theurgic" quality, to collective prayer. St. Ignatius of Antioch, for example, maintained that such prayer had greater power than individual prayer,[7] and St. Irenaeus wrote that collective prayer, if accompanied by fasting, could raise the dead. Luther himself, referring to a passage in the gospels, in which Jesus says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven," [8] asks what might not be obtained if a whole city were to unite in beseeching God.

Evidently the meaning here assigned to collective prayer is something quite beyond the purely psychological meaning which interests us at this moment. Those, however, who have recognized individual prayer as alone valid and those who have refused to recognize it have, in either case, merely been looking at one aspect of the same fact, not seeing that there is only a single religious activity, which is displayed now in the individual,

[6] Cf. Luther, *Pred.*, 7 Vol. III, 1885.
[7] Cf. *Ad. Eph.*, 5.2.
[8] Cf. Matth. XVIII. 19: Luther, *Pred.* 7.

now in the community, with the same sense of setting free, of uplifting the human toward the Divine.

If collective prayer were taken to mean, as it sometimes erroneously has been, a purely formal and external act, we should lose sight of the fact that it is only its internal aspect that gives it its religious value. Luther, who, as we have just seen, seemed to attribute to collective prayer an almost magical value, said none the less:

> *Wo rechtes Gebet sein soll, da muss ein Ernst sein, dass man seine Noth fühle, und solche Noth, die uns drückt und treibt zu rufen und schrein; so geht dann das Gebet von sich selbst, wie es gehen soll, dass man keines Lehrens bedarf, wie man sich dazu bereiten und Andacht schöpfen soll.*[9]

Examples of spontaneous prayer bursting forth, as Luther here says, like a cry of the soul, without any doctrinal support or preparation, are certainly not frequently found. Manzoni, in that very touching scene in which Lucia stands facing deadly peril in the castle of the Nameless One, makes her say:

> O most Holy Virgin, thou to whom I have so often committed myself, who hast so often heard and comforted me, who hast suffered so much grief, who art now so glorious, and hast wrought so many miracles for the poor afflicted one—hear me, rescue me from this danger and bring me forth in safety with my mother, O Mother of the Lord, and I vow to Thee to remain a virgin; I renounce for ever my poor lover, so as to be always only Thine.

This spontaneous cry of the soul is undoubtedly true prayer, such prayer (to use Tolstoi's words) as we do not pronounce on certain days of the year and at fixed hours but such as we utter in the moments of our noblest aspirations and which is sometimes called forth by sufferings, by the approach of death.[10]

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[9] Cf. Luther, *Der grosse Katechismus.*
[10] Cf. Leo Tolstoi, *True Life.*

Socrates breathed such a prayer as this before he drank the hemlock. But we cannot admit, adds Tolstoi, that such prayer can never be uttered in a gathering or in response to some external action; for one cannot deny that the individual, even when he is with others, may cut himself off from all distracting influences and attain complete isolation.

One cannot reasonably deny that the highest form of prayer occurs in a state of isolation; but equally one cannot deny that prayer in common may succeed in producing in the individual that state of mind which gives true prayer its character and value. It would also be a mistake not to see that the practice, the influence, the habit of praying together are important factors and educational means which permit the worshiper to mount gradually upward from a state of meditation, that the grandeur of the church and the sacred music may inspire him to pass through religious thought and contemplation of the sacred images to the higher stages of prayer. The human spirit cannot be confined by barriers and can open for itself any avenues that are required for satisfying its religious needs.

These considerations, however, bring us to consequences which have an important bearing upon our appreciation of the history of institutions and the developments of personal and institutional prayer.

As I have pointed out before, there is a general law—a law, one may say, of life itself—which governs the development not only of prayer but of every historic phenomenon. The alternating movement of prayer between a living religious emotion and an empty unmeaning formula has an analogy in its alternation from a creative to a contemplative phase. Between these two poles the history of the formation and the destruction, of the progress and decadence, of every religion unfolds and unrolls; with this increasing contrast the birth and growth of religions, of institutions, and of every heretical movement derived from them, are inextricably associated.

The same takes place with prayer, which both in its rational and its irrational phase, both in its magical and its religious

phase, is always struggling between a spontaneous creation, corresponding to the spirit's natural impulse toward a free and full development, and a period of pause, a conservation of values, tending to check the creative process and to restrict its activities within the fixed and arid formulae of tradition.

The phase of spontaneous activity is the prior of the two, just as free improvisation is prior to fixed formulae. For the religious spark flashes out from the individual, the prophet, the apostle, and from that spark is kindled the elemental substances that is latent in the masses waiting for the dawn. But as soon as the religious experience of the masses is embodied in their sacred books and their liturgies, then it is mainly to tradition and to public worship that the task is entrusted of recalling those original experiences and making them live again with a constantly renewed vitality.

What, however, the history of institutions mostly shows us is not a renewal but a drying up of the original religious experiences. This happens when they find themselves unable to retain those experiences in their pristine freshness; for this freshness, I cannot but repeat, is found not in the outer ritual of prayer but in the inner mind of the worshiper who makes the prayer his own.

Ritual ceremonials, sacred rites allow prayer to take place only on definite occasions and on regular lines. The formula is stereotyped, and strictly obligatory, its content is remote and no worshiper can venture to change a single word. The religious institutions of the ancient Romans adhered with the utmost scrupulousness to the exact words of the formularies of their prayers. The pontifex, or someone officiating for him, recited the traditional formula, in order that the priest might pronounce every word in its proper place, without displacement or confusion. Cicero mentions the Roman axiom: *Si aedilis verbo aut simpuvio aberraverit, ludi non sunt rite facti.*

The ritual formula possesses in every ecclesiastical institution an inexorable rigidity and the validity of prayer is made to depend upon its observance. We saw this in the preceding chapter

when we were dealing with the magical character which prayer sometimes assumes. But in the religious institution this incrustation of the creative activity becomes sacred and inviolable for centuries and centuries, as if there resided a magical virtue in its preservation and its exact repetition. The service books of the Egyptians of the Greco-Roman period reproduce faithfully and without any change the ritual texts which had been written centuries before on the walls of the pyramids; and formulae of very old prayers are still found in use thousands of years after the religious ideas to which they refer have passed away—they are even repeated in the ancient language, when it is no longer understood. Quintilian speaks of Latin prayers which were recited during the Empire but were incomprehensible even to the priests: *Saliorum Carmina vix sacerdotibus satis intellecta.*[11] This confirms the opinion that the origin of a sacred language can be traced to its survival in prayers handed down to peoples and generations that no longer understand its meaning; as happened with the mysteries of Isis in Hellenism, when the Greek-speaking priest, on opening the shrine, recited prayers in the Egyptian language; or with the Babylonians and Assyrians who employed the Sumerian language—the oldest sacred language that has yet come to light—although it was unknown to the people; or as happens at the present day when a large part of our Christian population repeat prayers in Latin without understanding a word.

It is not easy to say, however, which of these prayers originally rose spontaneously and which were thought out and formulated for purposes of worship. Probably they were all of the second class. This may in fact be gathered from the elaboration of the words, often to the point of exaggeration, and from the ceremonies which usually accompany them, such as the special vestments which have to be put on before they are repeated. As Heiler says, prayer, which is originally a relationship between man and God, threatens in the stereotyped formulae of the rite to

[11] *Inst.* I. 6.40.

lose consciousness on this relationship. Where the emotions are not sufficiently strong, where the heart ceases to take part in the act of worship the formulae are repeated with ceremonial stiffness, with official coolness, and the prayers are only dragged out mechanically. The priest who utters the formulae concentrates his whole attention on not making any mistake and on pronouncing every syllable clearly. For the laity who are present there is nothing left, under the most favorable circumstances, but to be struck with religious awe in the face of a mystery which is unrolling before their eyes and the meaning of which they frequently do not understand.

It would seem as though in the history of prayer the creative energy, after the completion of one flight, exhausts itself, and then nothing remains for the religious consciousness, if it is to satisfy its needs, but to seek laboriously in the old formularies of tradition for that life which it has lost and which it often mistakenly thinks it can find again there. But all that it can really find there is what it lives again itself, since personal prayer, when it is transformed into institutional prayer, remains barren for the religious consciousness until a new creative impulse, a new outburst of life urges the soul forward again on the upward path.

Let us look briefly at this process in history. From spontaneous primitive prayer we pass to a *jus liturgicum*, which requires fixed formulae, a sacred language, sacred trappings and vestments, particular positions which the worshiper has to assume before, during and after prayer, sacred places in which it has to be said and a time at which it must be repeated. But that does not last forever; nothing ever does that once becomes a part of the historical process; for the law of history is not stability but movement. Look at Israel. When its religion seems to be bound fast in the law Jesus arises. But Christianity before long raises the battlements of dogma and marks off rigidly the lines and the method of its liturgy.

Look at the pale and monotonous groundwork of Brahminism. At the rise of Buddha a breath of new life blows across

the East. But before long Buddhism too is transformed and assumes the narrow and sterile forms of the traditions of those peoples among which it spreads. On the one hand Buddhism sets off, as all revealed religions do more or less definitely, to wrap up in the lengendary and the divine both the founder and the texts which contain his teaching; on the other it degenerates into magical and superstitious elements which stain its original purity and transform meditation into a monotonous recitation or reading of the words of Buddha, which are considered more efficacious than any prayer.

Look at the abandoned tracts of Africa, Asia and India when Islamism appeared. Fast bound in their superstitions they seemed at first to be turning their eyes toward the Mediterranean civilization. But it was not long before Islamism in its turn became confined within the circle of national religions and opened the doors of its mosques to the superstitious beliefs of the peoples whom it had conquered.

The history of the growth of the hymn offers us another example of this process of externalization, of the arrest of spontaneous religious emotion. Even among primitive peoples we find references to the hymn, but it assumes its most characteristic form only in the more highly developed liturgical systems. It is here that every act of worship is accompanied by a hymn —that is, by a sacerdotal hymn, which is no longer the free or spontaneous prayer of the time or the simple versification of a traditional prayer in prose, but a composition set in a special artificial form and composed expressly by the priests. Such are, for example, the numerous Egyptian and Babylonian hymns, dry lists of epithets, of references to the sacred places of the cult, to symbols of deities and obscure mythological exploits. It is clear that we have here merely those aesthetic elements of song, that technique of worship which are calculated to arouse religious emotions in the soul of the worshiper, but certainly not the hymn proper, since there is an absence of clearness and sincerity. Now it is just at this point that the doors are opened wide for the entrance of superstition, since, as soon as sponta-

neity and sincerity become deadened superstition grows into life and energy and forces its way irresistibly into the church.

The tendency then, toward stability and uniformity of worship, toward the absorption of personal religion in the institutional formula reappears in the history of prayer whenever prayer, forsaking its natural seat, the religious consciousness, becomes no longer a conscious and sincere expression of religious feeling but an external formula, a dry recitation, a reading of words accompanied by gestures and lustrations in certain places and at fixed times.

The predominance, or rather the absolute dominance, of these external signs is at once a clear proof that prayer has withdrawn from the center of the religious consciousness, from the central region of the spirit, to the region of forms; and in proportion as the religious consciousness grows feeble in its functioning and retires behind the iron doors of formalism, magic and superstition force their way with greater insistence into beliefs and cults.

Nothing perhaps in history serves to show better the parallelism of decadent and progressive forms in different times and places than this alternation of prayer between the two tendencies of creation and conservation. The result is that sometimes communities that are contemporary with us seem, when we hear them pray, to be relics of some early civilization, while others which have preceded us in time may be described, in some respects, as citizens of kingdoms that have not yet been born or that can only be envisaged through the aspirations and labors of a few elect souls. Side by side with us there live masses of people who, having from a religious point of view lost practically all feeling, transform the most beautiful prayers of their traditions into dry routine formulae or magic practices; while there are others who, while not possessing a strong religious tradition, show, by the very plainness, the simplicity and the frankness of their invocations, a delicate sense of religious feeling. But as primitive mentalities and magical methods are not confined to a certain period of history but proceed more or less clearly on a parallel course even in times of greater progress, so

personal prayer never altogether dies out, even under the constant threat of absorption and petrifaction in a religious institution.

In the most dramatic phases of the conflict traditionalism and reform, liturgical and extra-liturgical prayer, institutional and personal prayer tend to displace one another. This reveals a complete misunderstanding of their respective functions in history. A calm observation of the facts leads to the conclusion that even if one of the two pivotal points of the struggle could be displaced by the other it ought not to be. On the contrary what ought to be avoided is the crushing domination of one over the other; for the progress of prayer consists in the intermingling of the creative with the conservative tendency, the satisfaction of the personal needs together with those of the institution.

And yet the prayer of the community, institutional prayer, ought not to be merely an expresssion of a collective experience but also a mutual edification of the individual members. Edification, οἰκοδομή, is in fact an awakening, a vitalizing of preexisting and dormant religious feelings. Community worship and meditation, wisely remarks A. C. Bouquet,[12] may serve quite as much to heighten as to lower religious feeling. Therefore if it can heighten it the Church must not be regarded as a mere sum of individuals, a mere aggregate of persons in which each one acts by himself independently of the others. In this connection Bouquet compares the solemn "*Sanctus*" of Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the equally powerful solos. The individual should be carried along in the enthusiasm of collective prayer. St. Paul understands collective prayer in this way when he assigns to it the task of awakening religious thoughts and feelings in the soul of individuals, thus being the first in Christian theology to recognize the pedagogic value of collective prayer. In fact it ought to serve not only for the edification of the individual but also for silencing egoistic desires and eudaemonistic interests, so

[12] Cf. *The Christian Religion and its competitors to-day*, Cambridge, 1925.

as eventually to change sometimes from prayer of the community into prayer for the community—as appears when a priest or a worshiper prays, as we have seen above, for all, only asking from others their assent. The worshiper ought then to feel the common aspiration as his own interest. The small and the weak ought to be raised to the height of their common spiritual environment; those who do not yet know what it is to pray or who can hardly whisper a prayer ought here to learn what it is. E. von der Goltz and Geyer[13] think for this reason that public worship ought to make use of prayers written in ritual books and read by the person who prays, not strictly as prayers but to prepare the mind for personal prayer. So understood, the function of institutional prayer would be not to absorb or destroy, but rather to awake the personal feeling. The individual, putting his own personality in contact with the source of life, with the Divine, which is the central point toward which united prayer converges, acquires, as Robert Will[14] points out, a more perfect independence; and the feeling that his individuality is linked with institutional worship, so far from weakening it really adds strength to it; for it produces a direct consciousness that the Divine, in which the individual is centered, is the same Divine which exists for others. In brief, the consciousness of the communion of all individuals in the Divine means a realization of what each man owes to his neighbors.

Institutional prayer, then, if it demands a renunciation, requires also a personal contribution—a renunciation of all that aims exclusively at the particular interests of the individual, and a personal contribution, inasmuch as the individual, sacrificing the usual trend of his thoughts and egocentric aspirations, contributes to the edification of the community by acts of love, acts which have an unmistakable value, not because all the individuals, in their vital impulse flock toward the entrance of the church where the Divine is worshiped in common, but because

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[13] Cf. *Gebet in der ältesten Christenheit*, Leipzig, 1911; Geyer and Rittelmayer, *Leben aus Gott*, Ulm, 1911.

[14] Cf. *Le Culte, Etude d'Historie et de Philosophie religieuse*, Strasbourg, 1925.

everyone is free to enter of his own accord. This implies a personal act of reflection which lends an ethical value to the individual's participation in collective prayer—an ethical value and a religious value at the same time, because, as E. Buonaiuti[15] remarks, the associated life forms an indispensable means of reconciling the different spiritual points of view which play an important part in the transcendent working out of religious experience.

But I feel that what I have now said may suffice to show that collective prayer or, more generally speaking, institutional prayer has a high task of its own to fulfill. The modern consciousness ought not, therefore, to look with suspicion on traditionalism or on institutional prayer, but ought to demand that it should relate itself closely to individuals and should draw nourishment and life from personal religion. If institutional prayer has in some cases become a synonym for dead things (and I have not hesitated to point this out), it yet possesses in other respects a vital stimulus with which it would be dangerous to dispense; it may be a source of the highest religious emotions which cannot be reached from any other starting point.

For personal prayer and institutional prayer it is equally prejudicial to destroy what it is in the common interest to preserve and to preserve what it is in the common interest to get rid of. To appreciate properly the two tendencies of creation and conservation means therefore to give due weight to religious institutions and the needs of the human personality. Nietzsche had already found in Greek religion the two principles—the Dionysiac and the Apollonian. The former, which is of objective value as regards the eternal fertility of being, is the subjective enthusiastic abandonment to the inexhaustible multiplicity of reality; the latter is a principle of the objective order, in multiplicity and of that subjective control which is reflected in the religious phase. The act of religious genius consists in the fusion of the two. To appreciate properly these two phases by way of

[15] Cf. *Le Religione nella vita dello spirito*, in "*Ricerche religiose*" Vol. II, no. 3. 1926.

prayer means to give due weight not only to its manifestation through which it attains, *ex analogia societatis humanae*, the feeling of the multiplicity of the social relations which it reflects, but also to the tendency by which the worshiper, in his most significant activity, fills tradition with a new ethical and religious life, so that he attains a fuller extent of liberty, a greater fullness of life, directed more completely than ever toward high and genuine forms of revelation.

Conscious of the ties which bind it to the past, the meditation of Buddha gives signs of the technicalities of Yoga; the prayer of Jesus contains an echo of the prophets and the psalms; the prayer of the Church Fathers and the Reformers never forgets the forms suggested by the Bible; and the saints of the Middle Ages still lend an ear to the voice of the Hellenistic mysticism of St. Augustine.

The prayer of the great religious geniuses is not entirely enclosed within the limits of preceding religious life nor is it left adrift in the tossing waves of spontaneous creative force. The religious geniuses who have felt most deeply the life of tradition have not failed to be aware of and to utilize the fresh inexhaustible spring which wells up eternally from the religious consciousness, ever yearning to approach still nearer to an unattainable ideal.

CHAPTER VII

The Methods of Prayer

We have dealt with the magical and religious, the personal and institutional phases through which prayer works itself out. Through these different phases it presses forward ever toward a greater fullness of life and the source of perfect blessedness, and is lit up by the varying lights which reason seeks to throw upon the conceptions of liberation, salvation and redemption. And in all this process it follows methods which enable us to bring out another noteworthy aspect of its development. This development may be seen to take place in two opposite directions. On the one hand there may be a growth of the rational rather than the irrational phases, the religious rather than the magical. On the other hand the effects of prayer may be determined by blind impulses or by scrupulous adherence to immutable formulas rather than by the conscious enlightened sincerity of religious emotion. In either case prayer gives evidence of a complete reversal of its functions and its value, brought about by contradictory conceptions of the world and of life.

The same thing occurs when prayer instead of serving as a means of active spiritual advancement becomes an attitude of passive self-abandonment. Whereas the latter shows itself as the expectation of a heavenly gift, the reception of the Divine Spirit descending from God to man, the attitude of activity on the other hand—whether it recognizes the Divine in man as well as in God or whether it sees it in man alone—starts from man and finds its full expression in him.

One has only to go back to the earliest appearance of the numinous to find indisputable evidence that among the original

forms of collective religious expressions was that attitude of passivity in which the worshiper's sole task was to prepare devoutly for the reception of the Divine.

India has recognized the *tapas* as the protectors of the realm, as the influence which makes seekers after truth follow the right path, which defends the right and—as a hymn of the Rigveda says—leads souls to the light. Similarly the ancient author of the Li-Chi, the Chinese book of ritual, says that the object of the ceremonies is simply to bring down spirits from heaven to adjust the relations between ruler and minister, to maintain good feeling between father and son and harmony among brothers, to give husband and wife their proper position and to regulate the relations between high and low. He concludes by saying that ceremonies serve in fact to assure the blessedness of heaven upon earth, thus approximating in his ideas to the heavenly spirits of the *tapas*. Later we have Augustine, Calvin and the Jansenists saying that only by means of Divine Grace freely given can man obtain redemption; while we have Maine de Biran adding that even prayer itself does not proceed from man, since everything that is great in the world can proceed from God only.

In contrast to this vew of the passive reception of a virtue that is not gained by man's efforts but by the mysterious intervention of the Divine, stands the activist view, according to which salvation is the product of man's virtue and the offspring of his works. When Buddha, Confucius and Mahomet, though championing opposite doctrines, yet agreed without knowing it in maintaining that nothing outside ourselves can change our destiny, a revolution took place in the basic principle on which human salvation rests. Man no longer thought, as did the turners of prayer mills and the wavers of paper banners, that he could be endued from above with divine virtues which he himself could neither produce nor cultivate. He believed on the contrary that he could obtain salvation solely by means of his own will.

The source of virtue, which had formerly been placed outside man, was now located in man himself. Prayer, or those mental

acts which lead up to it and take its place—strict attention, absorption, concentration, meditation, contemplation, adoration—now acquire the force of a very fine instrument for attaining an inward elevation. In place of the passive attitude of the simple repetition of words endowed with the unfailing power of opening the floodgates of the Divine, in place of a simple waiting for its bounteous descent upon him, there stands moral rectitude and the enlightened consciousness of good achieved—in other words, an active endeavor to build up the character and to work toward the spiritual elevation of the individual and the community.

Like the various phases to which we have called attention in the history of prayer (the irrational and rational, the magical and religious, the creative and conservative, the personal and the institutional), these two methods are in a constant state of alternation throughout the whole development of prayer. It will decline into decadence if it once remains motionless on either of the poles of its orientation, whereas it will find the path to perfection and its highest function in the life of the spirit when it is able rightly to blend these two methods. But that, as we shall shortly see, depends almost exclusively on the conception of the numinous, the sacred and the divine, and on the vision of life which sustains prayer.

The whole system of the Upanishads, which is a product of a new idea of the unity of life and the fruit of a new philosophy, is based on the identity of *Brahman* with *Atman*, i.e. of the Divine with the human soul. But it is clear that this conception of identity must definitely do away with the necessity for the intervention of the *tapas*, or of a divine grace, conceived as something entirely different from what man can produce of himself. The way of salvation can now only be a mental and bodily discipline for self-purification and self-perfection; and prayer, which is a means toward this end, must be simply a display of forces scientifically organized for attaining it.

Nor is the vision of redemption intrinsically different in those Oriental systems which tend to eliminate, and have altogether

eliminated, the idea of God, replacing it by that of Law; to which, however, the very same categories of infallibility and absoluteness have to be assigned if all security for redemption is not to be lost. The Sankya system was, like ancient Buddhism, atheistic, and Yoga was scarcely at all theistic. It was perfectly logical, therefore, that in these systems prayer should be reduced to a species of psycho-technics for effecting purification. Here the constant energies of the devotee must be directed toward supreme beatitude, to be obtained by him through the assimilation of himself to Brahman. His act of prayer must be the translation into action of this teaching, must in effect be a rational discipline of the will for subduing those desires and impulses which are considered capable of diverting him from his supreme goal. The asceticism and prayer of ancient India, which sprang from these teachings, are therefore bound to take shape in a discipline which marks the extreme limit possible to human nature in its effort to identify itself with the Divine. And as soon as the suppression of the desires and impulses, which has been obtained by means of the will, appears as a divine power, rising from the deepest roots of existence and capable of raising man above evil and of mastering it, it is not long before this very will is turned into a myth such as the *tapas*.

In fact the best that the system of Yoga in the Bhagavad-Gita has been able to give us, the best that the system of Kapila in the Raja-Yoga, the king of all the other Yogas, has been able to produce, all the best that Buddha himself has been able to teach us, for escaping from *samsara*—that great dread which weighs like a mantle of lead on the whole of ancient Buddhism and its modern offshoots which have spread into the West—is nothing but a gigantic personification of the hidden forces which lie at the base of the human spirit.

We may say in short that the opposition to the Vedic ritual, while demolishing the myth of a divine virtue that is imparted to man from the outside to work his redemption, ended by setting up in its place a new myth—that of the all-powerful will; a

myth setting forth a salvation that is not external but internal, that is not attainable by divine grace or by means of any ritual but through severe discipline, through spiritual exercises which are considered to be capable of making man master of himself and thus of the evil that is in him and around him. While the transcendental system of soteriology tended to accentuate human incapacity, the immanent system placed exclusively in man the source of every effort for salvation and redemption.

But as soon as the Buddhist soteriology placed in the illuminated Man the source of redeeming effort, the being deemed to be the only one who could teach the ways of salvation, then the road was at once opened for the soteriology of the Mahâyâna, which tends to regard the Bodhisattva straight away as saviors. The doctrine of the *avatari* in Hinduism—in which the gods play the part of periodical helpers in the redemptive work—cannot accord to prayer, as a strictly human product, the power of redemption. Almost the same thing happens to prayer in Sikkhism, which looks to God above for human salvation. Evidently the prayer which springs from this conception can only be a begging for salvation, a request that divine goodness may descend upon man and redeem him. The expectation of a Messiah in Zoroastrianism and Mithraism, Mithras being actually regarded as a mediator and redeemer; the significant idea of the Messiah in Judaism, definitely accepted by Maimonides as that of a personal savior; the Greek conception of Prometheus, which foreshadows the human spirit saved by Hercules; lastly the conception of Islam, which, though it postpones redemption until the last judgment, yet rests upon the prophetic character of Mahomet—these all point to one great underlying idea, viz. the general inability of man to attain salvation without the redeeming work of an incarnate god.

In consequence of these soteriological conceptions prayer cannot be an expression of a vital force through which man is renewed and finds within himself the source of his own redemption; rather will it be an invocation directed to the redeemers,

the saints, for their intercession or for receiving that divine power which their work has bequeathed to a world incapable of rising by itself.

Other doctrines will in due course be added for reënforcing this conception of incapacity by the conception of original sin, which leaves man in a state of profound misery, or by that of salvation by works or by faith. Eckehart had said that justice descends from God alone, even the mystical union is for him a gift from God to man. Luther will add, by way of explanation, that what man calls justice or virtue comes not from the creature, nor from works, nor from a created will or being, but from heaven. The keener and acuter this tragic sense of spiritual misery grows, the louder and more piercing will become the cry of prayer for redemption.

When Eastern culture finds its way into the prayer of Clement of Alexandria and of St. Augustine prayer becomes the art of receiving the "charisma," of receiving the sole means of transforming life. Just as the Buddhist monks seek to free man from evil by means of a severe discipline of the will, so the Christian monks, who settle in Babylonia and Arabia about 350 A.D., try to arrive at the salvation of the soul by perfecting the method of meditation and silence. The difference is merely that the former sought to develop the Divine from themselves, the latter to make themselves fit to receive it.

It is well known that in every religion monasticism and the cenobitic life have prescribed spiritual exercises and rules for salvation which bear a striking resemblance to one another. One might have thought that Buddha himself had inspired the celebrated *Questions and Answers* of Palladius: "Forget that you are a man," he advised his monks; "turn constantly to God, keep off the devil, who comes under the guise of thoughts and desires." Not to think, not to desire is, therefore, the way to reach what one calls Nirvana, the other *visio beatifica*.

Monks who are vowed to silence claim to be filled with divine light through withdrawing from the world and through persistent introspection. Others, such as the Quietists, who reject

all ecclesiastical authority and deny the value of all liturgical and traditional prayer, seek to base Christianity exclusively on the human personality. We may recall what was said by Antonietta Burignon:

> We have no need of fasting, to win salvation, nor of public prayers and sacraments . . . but if only we remain quiet and passive, when we are alone and in meditation, and if only we forget everything, God comes down to us and we discover all the truth concealed within ourselves.

Like Buddha, Molinos said that the Quietist is resigned to everything, so that by an inner path he can attain an unruffled state of peace and of blessedness.

Quietism, one of the religious movements which spread rapidly at the time of the Reformation, has, because of its anti-traditional attitude, favored the growth of Quakerism, Christian Science and the "New Thought." These represent to-day, both in the East and the West, the attempt to reach the Divine with no other means but meditation in silence and mental calm—the sole means considered to be adapted for removing the hindrances which prevent the ineffable divine life from operating in man. Neither the intellect nor the will is the path that allows the descent of God upon man, but silence and quietness, with its consequent avoidance of every vocal, musical or ceremonial accompaniment.

One must, however, distinguish two forms of silence and quietness—one which tends toward placidity, absolute immobility, a congealing of all the springs of life; another which does not aim at suppressing any of life's affirmations. Prayer, according to M. Alacoque, should "prepare the canvas which awaits the Lord's impress." This preparation corresponds to the internal state of calm and elevation which according to Maine de Biran announces the presence of God. And yet, as Madame Guyon acutely observes, when we speak of the prayer of silence we must not think merely of that form of prayer which is really its own negation; we must not, she says, erroneously imagine

that the soul remains dull, dead, inactive; "rather does it act with greater grandeur, with wider scope. As soon as the soul comes into the presence of God and by faith withdraws apart and remains in silent awe . . . speech is made perfect in silence." The author of the *Imitation of Christ* had already written: "O Jesu, splendor of the eternal glory, comfort of the pilgrim soul, with Thee my lips are speechless, but my silence speaks to Thee."

There is no need to quote further examples to show that there is a form of prayer and of adoration in silence which is an educational discipline. The effort of will and of concentration, the discipline which this form of prayer requires, favor the development of certain psychical activities, such as reflection, self-mastery and the cultivation of that sense of communion which is the indispensable condition for the ethical life. Hence there is developed a whole system of psycho-technics directed toward the advancement of the spirit in connection with ethics.

This activistic form of prayer appears in the Buddhist method of meditation that is laid down in the third section, the last of the eight paths, as expressed by the terms—right attention and right concentration. Buddha himself had taught, by word and by example, that this was the true and only method of escaping from *samsara*. This naturally led to a serious attempt to eliminate all unconscious activity and to contrive that the whole realm of the spirit should be occupied and dominated by the will. Thus, if a disciple wished to be in a position to reach a higher level not only of knowledge but also of morality, he had to give himself up to meditation and become master of himself. The educational effect of Buddhist meditation opens up here a wide prospect which must not be overlooked.

But this prospect has not yielded all its possible results. The Yhâna, which in the Pali writing means trance, transport, ecstasy and is of pre-Buddhist origin, is preceded by a discipline which quickly became incorporated in the teaching of the Master. It was meant to serve the purpose of changing the outcome of meditation into ecstasy and thus of completing the

process of meditation and assimilating it, in its initial and final stages, to prayer. This would naturally lead us to suppose that we here have to do merely with an ardent longing for the liberation of self, without any ethical implication. This is, in fact, a dominant note which persists throughout the history of Oriental mysticism. In this connection there is great significance in the hostility which Molinos, in the Western world, displayed to meditation, as contrasted with contemplation.

> Oh! how much to be pitied [he writes] are those immortal souls which, from the beginning to the end of their lives, limit themselves to mere meditation, making violent efforts to speak, even if God deprives them of speech . . . without taking any step forward on the path of the spirit.[1]

The old Buddhist teaching had said, it is true (as we shall see later on) that blessedness cannot be realized fully unless one has compassion on those who are in pain. But what emerges generally from Oriental mysticism is a cold and narrow amorality. Rudolf Otto, in analyzing the differences between Eastern and Western mysticism, has remarked how the former turns so decisively toward the subjective pole as to leave the other, the objective pole—the pole of the ideal—almost imperceptible. The evils that, as a rule, trouble Oriental prayer are physical evils such as sickness, old age, the eternal reincarnation; while those which afflict the prayer of religious Westerners are sin, vice and injustice.[2] It may be further remarked that the extremes of prayer —attention and concentration on the one hand, ecstasy or *yhâna* on the other—tend to the disintegration of a specific religious activity, which, unless it has an adequate ethical conception of life, cannot help deteriorating. In the amoral mysticism of Sankara the attainment of union leaves no further room for any ethical value. In the mysticism of Eckehart, on the other hand, the attainment of true being means attaining to the source of

[1] Cf. Molinos, *The Spiritual Guide*, (translated from the Latin), Glasgow, 1885.
[2] Cf. Rudolf Otto, *West-Oestliche Mystik*, Gotha, 1926.

goodness and of justice, so that "we return by way of love what we have received by contemplation." Salvation, redemption, is not sought, as in the East, because of the individual, but because it is in itself a thing eminently to be prayed for.

To convey the full meaning of this individualistic aspect of prayer one must add that the disintegration of the specific religious activity tends also to reduce individuals to centers that are completely detached from one another and to reduce prayer to a system of mechanical acts. There results a rigidity which enables prayer to take on, under another form, functions analogous to those which magic had assigned to it.

In Eastern and Western mysticism we come across a series of inner acts which are defined successively as attention, reflection, concentration, meditation, contemplation and adoration. The first two terms may be taken as included in the third—concentration, which the pseudo-Iamblichus recognizes as the first stage of prayer. From this first stage it should be possible to rise to the others, and to rise (according to the theory that is adopted) either by human or by divine goodness. But even at this first stage of prayer a man should secure his detachment from external reality and from every imagination or impulse which might divert him. Tauler, in this connection, gives the following advice: "Withdraw thyself from everything and from thine own self, and turn thy mind to God;" and St. Macarius adds: "God is the Highest Good; in Him thou oughtest to center all thy thoughts, in Him thou oughtest to stay and to sink thyself."

Meditation, which is the outcome of this turning of the whole self to God, this sinking oneself in Him, forms the second stage of prayer which has to be reached in order to attain union with the Divine, the identification of man with God. St. Theresa knew full well this *oratio de recogimiento*, the praying which finds its parallel in that reflecting and pondering which constituted the first of the four *yhâna* in the Buddhist system.

One can understand, therefore, that those who, like St. Theresa and other mystics, do not admit that man has the power to be

himself the author of his own salvation or even of his own communion with the Divine (since they make an entire separation between the Divine and the human and place the former outside the latter) cannot admit that prayer, as a means of redemption, can be a product of man. While retaining the groundwork of Oriental psycho-technics as a base from which to climb to the peaks of the Divine, they limit human faculty to concentration and meditation, recognizing in them simply the capacity to prepare and predispose the soul for that prayer which descends upon man through the action of the Grace of God. Human capacity, being, in their view, limited to preparatory acts and never being extended to higher acts, cannot subserve any purpose except that of disposing the soul to receive inspiration and directing it toward that prayer of silence and impassiveness which, if taken as the goal, would mean the undermining and even the cessation of the very existence of prayer.

Meditation may have an intellectual, an emotional or even perceptual character, as would be the case with the right concentration of Buddhism. It may be knowledge like the γνῶσις of which Proclus, Peter of Alcantara and St. John of the Cross speak. It may have the character of something pertaining wholly to the emotions, as pictured in the words of St. Theresa, who does not wish "to weary her intellectual activities" and prefers to remain "in the living presence of the Lord," or as expressed in the words of Madame Guyon, who speaks of *"gout expérimental de la présence de Dieu."* But in this aspect of prayer which we have called passive the γνῶσις or the living presence of the Lord or the actual experience of His presence are not attainable by one who prays without any intervention of the Divine, spontaneous or vouchsafed.

This will be seen still clearer in the stage that comes next to meditation—that of contemplation. This tends not only to the sinking of the soul in the Highest Good but also to its disappearing in it. This is followed by what is usually called the "mystic death," which can be traced not only in Yoga and Ancient Buddhism but also in Neoplatonism, Christianity, Hinduism and

Sufism. The culminating point in the passive aspect of prayer is that in which the man who prays lets the divine afflatus pierce through him and loses his whole personality in the act of contemplation.

Adoration is only an initial stage of contemplation. It may be described as a shrinking of the whole spirit before the Divine, without its becoming incorporated or identified with it. Adoration is a prostration of the created being before the Infinite, the Incomprehensible, the Unapproachable. It is an acute realization by man of his finite nature, but it yet can produce ecstasy and the mystic death, and can even bring about a paralysis of all activity, a cessation, as St. Theresa says, of the energies of the spirit, or, as David of Hapsburg adds, "A sleep of inner peace."

From adoration proceed firstly the "prayer of peace" and secondly the "prayer of union"—the latter term being, as is well known, commonly used by mystics to describe the last stage of prayer, that stage which Al Gazali called also the "prayer of ecstasy," because it is through union that ecstasy is reached.

But adoration should be distinguished from meditation, inasmuch as the latter implies nothing about the nature of its object, whereas adoration conceives of it as something unapproachable. Meditation can admit the identification of the human with the Divine; adoration clearly cannot. The difference between contemplation and adoration is also more easily seen if one realizes that the former may by analogy be compared to God's contemplation of His own work (as described by Aristotle) whereas adoration implies a consciousness of immeasurable inferiority on the part of the adoring subject, as compared with the adored object.

It might be thought that the ecstasy of union would mean the death of prayer and therefore man's negation of his own personality; but this is prevented (as we have seen above in connection with Madame Guyon's words on the subject of silent prayer) by certain conceptions of the world and of life which aim at opening up infinite vistas for religious activity. Some commentators accordingly distinguish the Buddhist *nirvana*—

which is the completion of redemption—from the mystic death, which is not final but is followed by a resurrection into beatific union with the Divine.

From what I have said so far about the successive states which proceed from attention and reflection up to adoration and prayer, I hope it may be concluded that those states, which succeed one another in order, can be found in specialized systems of teaching and specialized spiritual exercises, since there is nothing to prevent prayer from rising spontaneously from the spirit without need for passing successively from one state to another. And I hope it may also be concluded that not one of the states can be confused with prayer, since they are only a preparation or a substitute for it.

Some psychologists, however, have maintained that the meditation of Yoga or of Buddhism, the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius or Palladius, contemplation or adoration are in reality prayers. As a matter of fact, contemplation and adoration are indispensable phases of the religious life, just as prayer is; but adoration is a contemplative abandonment of self to a supreme value and, as such, is a phase of prayer. It is a concentration of self in the Divine—which constitutes another phase of prayer. Prayer, in its turn, is something more than meditation, contemplation or adoration. It is essentially a living communion of the human with the Divine, a communion which rises step by step to forms that are ethically still higher. Thus it is that prayer, while it can pass from each of the above states to the other, is something over and above all of them.[8]

This, however, cannot apply to those states which proceed from attention and concentration and pass on to contemplation and adoration. Unlike these, prayer, in its constant struggle between the two manifestations above referred to, the active and the passive, expressing itself as it does now in an adoring silence, a beatific ecstasy, now in fruitful social action, embraces

[8] Cf. J. Chansou, *Etude de Psychologie religieuse, sur les sources et l'efficacité de la prière dans l'expérience chrétienne* (Paris, 1927), where it is argued that prayer is something more than contemplation, meditation and adoration.

and comprises the whole of human life in its deepest necessities. Starting from the material and eudaemonistic needs in which it takes its rise it proceeds to those needs which are most deeply and most exquisitely spiritual—from personal and indispensable requirements up to the most complex needs of social life. And the more it can avail itself of the experience gathered during its onward march, the richer and more precious does it become.

The course of mysticism is similar to that of prayer. Starting from the way of purification, of renouncing the world, the affections and desires, proceeding by repentance and penance, it passes on to the way of illumination, which is essentially peace and rest in the Divine. Thence it proceeds to the identification of the human with the Divine in prayer; to pressing firmly forward to the Supreme Good, in faith, in hope and in love; to a burning passion of divine love—as expressed in St. Augustine's words: "*O amor, qui semper ardes et numquam extingueris, charitas, Deus meus, accende me.*" And from the way of illumination, which Madame de Chantal called "a silent breathing of love in the immediate presence of God," it passes on at last to that single-hearted eager yearning to reach God. "Thee, O Father," says the Indian Mânikka-Vâchakar in prayer, "I desire to reach, in Thee I desire to rest." [4] "*Veni, veni,*" adds the author of the *Imitation of Christ, "quia sine te nulla erit laeta dies aut hora, quia tu laetitia mea et sine te vacua est mens mea.*" And not only is yearning for the Divine manifested in that "way of unity" but also a longing to be absorbed in God in an eternal contemplative union.

Mysticism too contains the two poles that are marked by the activist and the passivist phase. Here, while the divine object stands at one time outside, at another time within the human being who prays, the process of attaining to it cannot avoid the alternation of passive abandonment and active manifestation. Behind it all we find, here also, two fundamentally different

[4] Cf. *A Few Hymns of Mânikka-Vâchakar and Tayumanavar,* trans. by P. A. and G. O. Pope, Madras, 1897.

conceptions of the world and of life and therefore of human nature and human capabilities.

Starting, then, from different conceptions, the manifestations of Eastern and Western prayer both tend to assume the form, now of an aid to passive abandonment, now of an active building up of character—now of a fruitful training of the will, now of the barrenness of a mystical technique. The idea of *Dyâna* and the idea of *Karma* in ancient India suggest two different methods of salvation—one that of meditation, the other that of works. Later a third method will be added—salvation attained by faith. This was suggested by the idea of *Bhakti*. In fact, in the *Bhagavad-Gita* one method of salvation postulates faith. When these manifestations appear in modern India, they give rise on the one hand to the so-called Southern school of Ramanuja—which teaches man to give himself up to God and let himself be led like a kitten by its mother—on the other hand to the Northern school which rather counsels keeping close to the mother, so as to coöperate with her. In China Lao-tze represents the doctrine of purity by way of faith as against Confucius, who enjoins salvation by means of works. Some Japanese Buddhist sects enjoin salvation through faith in the love of Amida and these have established the so-called Amida-Buddhism; other sects, seeking to attain salvation by way of works, have formed the Zen-Buddhism. A similar polarization of religious activity is found in Judaism with its prophets called by God and its professional prophets. Finally, when these differing manifestations become marked in early Christianity we have on the one hand the religion of the Law and the Pharisees, on the other hand the active and fruitful religion of Jesus. Later will be found the two opposite manifestations of Roman Catholicism, which seeks salvation in works, and Protestantism, which finds it only in the virtue of faith.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that one may see a complete reversal taking place in the function of prayer when it changes from an active means of spiritual advancement into an

attitude of passive self-abandonment. We have now also seen how it changes from a psychic action proceeding from man to God into a metaphysical action descending from God to man. The cycle of the development of prayer opened with an activity of the spirit, which was led by a vital impulse to advance toward its own perfecting, was enlightened by its experience of the Divine, and fluctuated backwards and forwards between a magical and a religious phase, a creative and a conservative phase, an institutional and personal phase. The cycle now concludes with a renunciation of the world, an attitude of passivity (such as the Hindu *Bhakti* or the European Quietism) that waits for the gift of Divine Grace. Starting from an exaggerated conception of human power, it finishes in a sad consciousness of absolute incapacity. Starting from a blind faith in human forces alone, passing on from the idea of collaboration with God, as in the Western Hindu school or in the Judaeo-Christian idea, it eventually ends in a fatalistic view of human incapacity and hence in that form of prayer which consists in absolute inaction and inspired silence, until a new vision of the world and of life points out to man as he prays a new and more radiant path.

Part III

MEANING AND VALUE OF PRAYER

CHAPTER VIII

Types of Prayer

From the critical observations on the problem of Methodology which have been made in the first part of this volume we may conclude that every scientific investigation into prayer must rest, consciously or unconsciously, upon a classification into types. It is not possible to start any philosophical investigation into the meaning and value of prayer without describing and analyzing its different forms.

Two methods have usually been adopted for attaining this end—one which aims at distinguishing between types in a simple or *a priori* manner by reference to definite philosophic or religious systems, the other which proceeds by way of empirical observations or *a posteriori,* taking historical and psychological data as the basis of inquiry.

Much help in the task of determining the different types of prayer is obtained from the comparative history and science of religion, though this help might prove to be misleading if, yielding to the temptation of evolutionary research, we were to consider the different types of prayer as evolved directly one from the other. But to this erroneous conception of the development of prayer and of religious facts I have already called attention and it is therefore not necessary to touch upon it further.

Considerable help in the work of classification is also to be derived from the psychological study of religious facts. It would, in fact, be a serious error to set oneself to make a classification of the types of prayer without reference to the state of mind and emotions which determine it and to the needs to which it re-

sponds. To separate the help which history gives from the help which psychology gives could only lead to the fixation of types which would correspond to a defective view of reality. In the first case we should have a purely internal and therefore one-sided description of the facts of experience; while in the second case we should arrive at a merely external and therefore inadequate description of the act of prayer.

The same may be said of the classifications proposed by those who rely upon the historical and psychological knowledge of one religion only. The advantage derived from an adequate conception of religion, from a knowledge of the history of different religions (and observe that I speak intentionally of "the history of religions" and not merely that of prayer) is so evident that it is unnecessary to insist upon it or to appeal to the authority of Max Müller, who said that the man who knew only one religion did not know what religion was. One needs only some familiarity with historico-religious researches to realize how much light is thrown upon a religious phenomenon such as prayer by a knowledge of documents supplied by the history of religions, by early creeds and cults. Prayer is a phenomenon so complex and so difficult to assign to its most characteristic and significant types that one cannot with impunity forego any sources of illumination, from whatever quarter they may come.

If we cast a glance over the attempted classifications of prayer made under criteria that preclude any successful issues to investigations we can see the enormous confusion that exists.

We read of prayers of invocation, of lamentation, of appeal, of petition, of intercession, of sacrifice, of offering, of persuasion, of trust, of devotion, of submission, of dependence, of thanksgiving, etc. Usually five types are distinguished—first, of adoration (exemplified in Psalm CXLVI); secondly, of thanksgiving (Psalm CIII); thirdly, of petition (Psalm LXXXVIII); fourthly, of intercession (Abraham for Sodom and Gomorrah); and fifthly, of supplication (Psalm LXXXVI). They are ranged under three soul-processes—one egoistic, another altruistic, and the third absorption in God.

This last type of prayer I have clearly discussed and I have said that it cannot strictly in itself be called prayer unless accompanied by a state of contemplative adoration; for it is evident that if the extinction of self means the melting of the human in the Divine it must be equivalent to the suppression of one of the two polar points that are indispensable to prayer, or rather to the suppression of the praying individual and with him of prayer itself. This attitude of the soul, if it is to be called prayer, must be confined to the aspiration after self-extinction and not to its attainment, or must be understood in the sense in which it was meant by the author of the *Imitation of Christ* and by Madame Guyon.

To these five types of prayer should be added a sixth, that of confession, which has an altruistic and social character; but as may readily be seen the test for this type of prayer is derived from its content. G. Brighton has a similar classification of the prayers of early races into those of thanksgiving, petition and repentance. To these types might be added those of invocation, praise, wonder, submission, elevation and exaltation. Some have considered that recurrent prayers asking for rain, fine weather, etc., should be excluded on the ground that they are not religious.

But any attempt at classification of prayer which is based upon its content is bound to fail miserably because prayer may be at the same time petition and thanksgiving, confession and intercession, act of humility and simple expression of obedience, or a complete expression of the surrender of the will; and it may be confined or extended to one or more of these contents without essentially changing its character. Father Faber, in his *Growth in Holiness*, describes to us how prayer may pass from intercession to thanksgiving, from thanksgiving to praise and to petition, without undergoing thereby any change in its inner nature which could entitle us to distinguish it into various types.

But a more serious consideration for those who claim to rely on the content of prayer as a certain test for determining its classification is that prayer may quite well be without any con-

tent at all and may consist simply in a very special relationship of the religious consciousness to the Divine. Under these conditions, which are so frequently found in religious geniuses and in the most exalted moments of prayer, it is clear that a classification based on content loses all meaning.

In fact, psychologists have not been wanting who have laid stress upon this special relationship and have maintained that it is not necessary for prayer to have any doctrinal content. J. Segond[1] may be mentioned as one of these. But we must be careful here not to run the risk of reducing prayer to its irrational aspect, divorced completely, as regards classification, from its rational aspect, or even of reducing it to one of its preparatory or subsequent manifestations. Attention, reflection, concentration, meditation and adoration are not, when taken by themselves (with the exception of the last named) necessarily religious processes. If therefore they are to be used for forming a classification of prayer into different types they must at any rate be prayer in some form or other, since prayer cannot be composed of extraneous elements.

"Prayer," said Emerson, "is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good."[2] When prayer is reduced to a manifestation, a relationship of the spirit, to that pure communion of the Divine of which St. Paul spoke to the Romans (viii. 15, 26) and which is described by St. Theresa in her *Autobiography* (XXII), Maine de Biran in his *Pensées*, Amiel in his *Journal Intime* and Arturo Graf in his *For a Faith*, or when it is a simple act of reflection and of joy in converse with the Divine, or when it is admiration and an act of reverence combined, a breath of the Divine and an ineffable thrill in its presence, or contemplative adoration—then it is clear that it has lost all content. One may recall that Madame Guyon wrote to Fénelon: *"Je suis depuis*

[1] Cf. op. cit.

[2] Cf. Emerson, *Self-reliance* in "Essays," First Series, p. 77. Houghton Mifflin Co. Centenary Edition, Boston and New York, 1903-4.

quelques jours dans un état continuel de priere pour vous. Non que je désire rien de particulier, ni que je demande chose ancune; c'est un état qui peut être comparé a une lampe, qui brule sans cesse devant Dieu." But what is here called prayer is precisely a characteristic attitude of the religious consciousness, a state of prayer and nothing else—a thing which must be assumed as necessary and inherent in every act which can claim to be regarded as a substitution for or a constituent of prayer.

La Combe, the well-known confessor of Madame Guyon, distinguished two types of prayer which get rid of the difficulty of reference to a content—the prayer of meditation and the prayer of the emotions. N. Söderblom, F. Heiler and Van der Leeuw have made a better classification into two types of prayer, the mystic and the prophetic. The former corresponds to that attitude of the worshiper by which one withdraws from the world and from the profane, in order to turn definitely toward the Divine as the final and supreme value; the latter is an outburst of the emotions, a liberation of the heart, a sincere expression of the need of help, of grace, of salvation on the part of the worshiper for himself and for his brethren.

But although the test adopted in this last classification may help us in expressing more clearly the ethical content of prayer and therefore its value, yet it does not meet the demand for a division into types which will keep clearly differentiated the various aspects of prayer and will also permit us to obtain a reliable test of values. Nor does it seem right to decry the existence of an eudaemonistic phase in mystic prayer as many do when enforcing the distinction from prophetic prayer.

The danger which the various classifications of prayer have difficulty in avoiding is that of not being able to procure a certain criterion for differentiation, the result being that without much effort a prayer can be removed from one class to another and *vice versa*. It is not enough to look at some external or internal aspect of prayer, at some of its historical or psychological manifestations; just as it is not enough to look at its history in order to gather its meaning and value. The classification of

prayer must therefore be arrived at by a wide survey of its varied phenomena combined with an observation of its function in life —an investigation in fact which proceeding on evolutionary lines follows the chain of causes right up to their earliest origins and irrational bases, as I have tried to do above. A teleological survey of prayer's functions must be included, care being taken that the prime cause does not become divorced from the final end toward which, consciously or unconsciously, everything that has a history inevitably tends.

Only under such conditions will prayer reveal itself in all its simplicity as the deepest and most compelling vital impulse, as the most ardent yearning of the soul for the higher forms of life—a yearning fed by the constant faith that an immutable order of things will allow of the final triumph of these forms, since without this faith not only prayer but every religious act would be devoid of meaning.

If then we wish to attempt a classification of the types of prayer we must definitely abandon every criterion which rests upon a one-sided vision of reality or upon a contingent view of it, and concentrate our attention on those activities of the spirit which produce prayer and sustain it.

The modern classification of psychical activities tells us of the activities of presentation, judgment and will,[3] not because it aims at breaking up the life of the spirit into one or other of its various kinds of existence but in order better to explain its meaning and its laws.

We ought to follow a similar course with prayer. Arising as it does from a vital impulse, illuminated by the experience of the numinous and the divine, and spreading into every part of the activities of the spirit, it cannot find any more natural classification than that which is based upon the psychic activities, since from these it derives those unmistakable and eternal tints which it presents in all its different types. Springing from the deep realms of the irrational and bound in the tenacious and

[3] Cf. Franz Brentano, *La Classificazione della attività psichiche*, trans. by M. Puglisi, Lanciano, 1913.

galling grip of physical evil, prayer could not help, in a primitive system of thought, appearing as the best instrument offered to man for obtaining material freedom, for avoiding perils and winning those blessings which are held to be necessary to the preservation of life. This process will be repeated in every phase of the development of prayer, and on every occasion when a primitive mentality finds itself face to face with the urgency and gravity of those dangers which threaten man's material existence. Life demands above all else its own preservation; the will searches for the way of salvation; the intellect craves for the light of knowledge; the activity of presentation seeks embodiments of beauty; and all this takes place not in succession, as might be thought at first sight, but simultaneously, according to the individual disposition and state of the spirit's development.

In front of man, however dimly they may be understood, are ranged two series of motives. One series is originated by the external conditions of life, conditions which arouse and stimulate his practical activity, since his prime needs of food, clothing and shelter must be satisfied. The other is originated by his internal condition, by the need which he feels of piercing the mystery which surrounds him and assigning a meaning to the phenomena which confront him and which must receive an explanation if he is to regulate his own life, if he is not to find himself in opposition to the adverse forces which lurk in every place around him and in his own body; if, in short, he is to give effect, with the minimum expenditure of energy, to his innate will for supremacy.

This evidently implies a coördination of knowledge and experience, and is at the root of that coördination which is supplied by religion, especially in the threefold division of worship into sacrifice, mystery and prayer. Indeed it is supplied particularly in prayer, which embraces and animates the two other aspects of worship and from which man has received the strongest incentive to put into force his desire for supremacy, through the inevitable necessity of defeating and mastering evil. In this coördination we may see physical remedies, by means of which

religions have sought to regain lost health or to protect the body from the attack of illness; there we find intellectual remedies which religions have offered, and through which, by means of myths and revealed doctrines, they direct human hopes toward an ideal life; here also are moral remedies which religions have introduced with the revelation of laws which claim to be inspired by the Deity or with teachings and precepts which aim directly at promoting and arousing love of what has been recognized as good and just and hatred of what has been considered as unjust, blameworthy and sinful; and lastly there are physical-aesthetic remedies wherever religions through drink, dancing, sacred images, ascetic exercises, phallic cults, temples, music and prayer have sought to obtain for the religious man those ineffable joys which should spring from contact with the Divine.

This life function of religion, illuminated by means of prayer, must necessarily continue to find its source in the fundamental psychic activities. From a pure and simple eudaemonistic expression of the liberation and preservation of the material life of the individual and of society emerges that type of prayer which we may call eudaemonistic. From this same activity springs, at a second stage, with the rise of the ethical conception of the Divine and its relations with the world, that ethical prayer which is a high exercise of love and therefore of kindness and justice in social life. Again from a mental activity—in which man, in his constant attempt to rationalize the irrational, to conceive the inconceivable, to penetrate the tremendous yet fascinating mystery, stands as he prays stricken and perplexed by the power of truth and adores in the Divine that supreme light which lightens his own conscience—there comes into being noetic prayer. Through this activity fresh force is imparted to the historical growth of prayer and to its onward march, which really consists in an increase of spiritual enlightenment. Lastly from the contemplative activity, which allows man as he prays to distinguish what is holy from what is fearful, terrifying and alarming and to press on more and more toward the Divine—conceived as the sublime ineffable Beauty—we see emerging aesthetic prayer and

with it all the exquisite creations of the liturgy and of sacred art which accompany it.

Thus by distinguishing prayer into the eudaemonistic the ethical, the noetic and the aesthetic types, we are better able to see its function in life, its unceasing effort to free man from evil and bring the human to the level of the Divine.

CHAPTER IX

Eudaemonistic Prayer

Let us examine a little more in detail these types of prayer.

Urged on by the vital impulse man has at all times sought eagerly to increase his power of mastering and subduing physical evils, and every time he has turned with faith to religion he has done so because he has thought to find in it the surest means of obtaining this end. The fetish is believed to render him immune from all ills and to make him invulnerable. Idols, amulets and talismans are believed to defend him from the menace of hostile weapons and to assure him success in his enterprises. The magic power which he ascribes to the fetish, the *tabu*, the wizard and in general to all "numinous" objects, must be capable of serving material aims by means of oracles and mysterious words, by means of acts which have the power of releasing or of binding—according to the particular need—the adverse powers. The *totem* is nothing else than a weapon of attack or defense, with which one has to reckon; and the totem animal is often killed in ceremony by the whole community and consumed, in order that as its flesh is eaten its special virtue and secret force may pass into the bodies of the faithful who observe this practice. With the force thus acquired they are enabled to succeed in enterprises which are destined to crown their material life with blessings. Some parts of the *totem* are preserved as a powerful instrument against all kinds of ills.

The *tabu* is a dangerous object which must be avoided like deadly poison; but besides fetishes, protective idols, talismans and amulets (which include relics of heroes, sacred images, holy waters and springs which give purification and healing) re-

ligion supplies incantations, exorcisms, prayers and rites expressly devoted to the recovery of health and the satisfaction of natural desires for material good.[1] It also supplies holy men and priests, who are sometimes magicians and doctors as well. At any rate they are persons considered capable—like the Shamanists of Liberia, the Angekok of Greenland or the Fumu of Africa—of administering remedies and suggesting or repeating prayers that are most efficacious for the health and prosperity of the individual and the community.[2]

In the dawn of civilization prayer seems to be almost exclusively dominated by material interests and devoted to the preservation of life and the supply of means of preserving it. The first cry of prayer is a cry for help. F. Heiler says with good reason that prayer originally arose out of what was simply a concrete need, an elementary requirement on behalf of the life of the individual or the group. Drought and famine, storms and tempests, attacks of foes and wild animals, illnesses or epidemics are some of the main motives for primitive prayer; fear, panic, terror, alarm, anger, passion, hatred, suffering, pain, anguish, are the usual emotions that determine eudaemonistic prayer.

Socrates, in the decadent period of the Greek cult, sarcastically remarked, in conversation with Euthyphro, on the contractual and eudaemonistic character which that cult displayed when the people of Corcyra, weary of domestic conflicts, asked the oracle of Dodoma to what god they ought to direct their prayers to obtain a cessation of so calamitous a trouble. The same situation was brought to view when J. G. Frazer, writing of the Neo-caledonians, said that their prayers were so completely directed to the satisfaction of men's wants that if they had been heard few could fail to be provided with every necessity of life. And so it

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[1] Cf. J. G. Frazer, *Totemism*, London, 1910; S. Reinach, *Mythes et Religions*, Paris, 1905-06; E. Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la Vie Religieuse; Le Système Totemique en Australie*, Paris, 1912.

[2] Cf. A. de Roy, *La Religion des Primitifs*; J. M. Van der Burgt, *Dictionnaire françois-kirnudi*, where under the word *prêtre*, which corresponds in kirnudi to *fumo*, it is said that this word is derived from *ku-fumura*, i.e., one who administers remedies and celebrates the sacred rites.

has been always. Prayer has ever been conceived by the people as a powerful instrument for security and well-being. The first and most imperious invocation in prayer is that made for release from a present and pressing evil: "Sun of the morning, sun of the evening," prays the Egbos, "free me to-day from every evil." The second petition is for well-being and happiness: "O father, who has gone before us," prays the native Brass, "save our life and make thy house fruitful, so that we, thy sons, may increase and multiply, grow rich and powerful."

First of all daily bread is asked for. "Be gracious," says the Hottentot to the new moon, "grant us much honey, provide food abundantly for the cows, that they may give much milk." But the certainty of obtaining daily bread depends upon atmospheric conditions and also on relief from the interference of hostile powers that are alert and ready to disappoint human expectations. Hence come the prayers directed to bad spirits, as is said to be the practice with the Hookers and the Lepchas of the Himalayas, who do not pray to good spirits because they do not do harm. But if prayer is lacking in devoted love—which certainly is not felt for bad spirits—it is no longer a religious act and thus tends, as we have seen above, toward the phase of magic and exorcism, being liable to be dominated by that emotion of fear which can only exist as a secondary and incidental motive in prayer that is truly religious. Rudolf Otto himself, who insists so much on the quality of dread and fear in the numinous, does not hesitate to say that here we are dealing with something which only bears a resemblance to fear and which therefore must be interpreted only on analogy, being in reality something different.[3] The sacred *horror* of the Latin, the *emât Jahve* of the Israelites, the *divino spavento* spoken by Alessandro Manzoni—it is these, rather than fear in the ordinary sense of the word, that we meet with in religion. They do not, like fear, imply hatred of and flight from the object that inspires them and an impulse to seek protection from it in other forces. What

[3] *Ganz etwas anderes ist als Sichfürchten*, says R. Otto in his volume on *The Idea of the Holy*.

they reveal is an experience, more or less dim, of the infinite distance of the creator from the creature, an intuition of that overpowering sovereign omnipotence which led St. Augustine to say: *"Inhorresco in quantum dissimilis ei sum; inardesco in quantum similis ei sum."*[4]

On the other hand the practical need of material blessings, which weighs upon the consciousness of the man who prays and may be produced by fear, is a phase which is only secondary and incidental and never permanent in religion.

> *C'est pour cela qu'on prie* [writes Bousset] *qu'on demande parce qu'on n'a rien; et, par conséquent, qu'on ne peut rien, ou, pour tout dire en un mot, qu'on n'est rien en matière de bien, un pur rien . . . pour prier on se met dans l'esprit bien avant cette première vérité; je ne puis rien.*

Prayer, then, if it is produced by this practical need, is the response to the consciousness of man's own nothingness. When a man's attempt has failed to obtain what he wants, what he most needs, with his own powers, then arises prayer directed to the higher powers—powers, that is, which are capable of effecting what man cannot effect for himself. Such prayer may be sustained by the fear of evil but it must be fed by faith, by love and by hope if it is to have any meaning.

W. H. Rivers has collected various prayers which the Todus say to their gods in order to protect their buffaloes. They cannot be really distinguished, in so far as they are appeals for aid and protection, from those mentioned above. An Indian when he is in danger prays to his god to save him, just as the Melanesian does when he turns to the Ancient Father to rescue him from the storm and bring him in safety to the shore. The motive being the same, the words which come to the lips are everywhere practically identical.

Prayers for the preservation of life, for health and for food

[4] Cf. *Confessions*, XI.8. Cf. also A. Chiappelli, *The Idea of the Holy*, in "*Progresso Religioso*," Vol. II. page 268 ff.; M. Puglisi, *Religion and Fear*, in "*Cultura Filosofica*," Florence, 1917.

are accompanied by others for the fertility of the soil, of women and of animals, all tending to promote material prosperity. The same may be said of prayers which relate to protection against the attacks of wild animals and enemies. "O great Quotzi," cries the Red Indian, "grant that I may live long, that I may face my enemies without fearing them and may find them asleep so that I may kill many of them." "O Modziamo," pray the Rawenda (a Bantu tribe), "preserve us from evil and grant us all good." "O my grandfather," prays the Sioux of North America, "when I go into battle grant that I may capture many horses and kill many enemies; but in peace grant that anger may not enter my heart."

Primitive eudaemonistic prayer is repeated, as I have said above, every time that man finds himself likely to be dominated by the emotion of a present and pressing danger, and hence it reappears in every civilization both in ancient and modern religions. The Vedic prayer to *Agni*, "Thou art the life, thou art the protector of man; grant us glory and riches," is the same, with a few variations, as that which is repeated by the ancient Persians, the Jews and the Greeks. The Gospel words, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," [5] only express the deep faith implicit in every eudaemonistic prayer. The dominating thought in the prayers of the Aztecs is health, crops, rain, freedom from famine, defense against danger, illness and defeat. And the dominating thought in the prayer of the Chinese is rain and good harvests, riches and long life.

One must not assume from this that primitive prayer or the prayer of those old civilizations which have been recently mentioned is something lacking in deep ethical significance; but for the moment we are concerned with bringing out the predominating eudaemonistic character of prayer in that type of mentality which I have termed primitive. The Babylonian and Assyrian kings pray sometimes for things of ethical value, just

[5] Cf. Mark xi.24; Matt. vii.7; Luke xi.9.

as primitive races do; but what stands out as the most conspicuous feature is the supplication to their gods for earthly and material blessings, such as long life, large family, health, nerve, joy, a full life, stability of the kingdom, victory over enemies and conquest of their territories. A simple eudaemonistic prayer of a primitive mentality is that found in the *Samaveda*: "O hurler of thunderbolts," it says, "bring me in both thy hands every blessing, load me with riches and many cattle, since thou art so great." Another may be found in the *Rigveda,* where a man prays for long life, for well-being, for strong sons, food, riches, bulls and horses, golden chariots, protection against the enemy and victory over them. The Homeric heroes scarcely ever pray for moral gifts but, influenced throughout by eudaemonistic motives, they make entreaties for victory over their enemies and for their extermination. It is rightly remarked by Heiler that the prayer of Catholic and Protestant peasants of the present day does not differ in this respect from that of peasants of the Middle Ages, since we find in it the same motives of health, rain, good weather, good harvest, well-being, success in their undertakings and even victory over their enemies, without any ethical implication and hence without any substantial difference which might raise any doubt as to their proper classification.

"Every man of good sense," wrote Plato in the Timaeus, "will, when he starts an important work, ask help of the gods;" and St. Thomas Aquinas sets no limits to the requests that may be made in prayer except what is not lawful: "*Hoc licet orare, quod licet desiderare.*" Mahomet sees no difference between prayers directed to obtaining definite material benefits and those that are animated by ideal values. Nor has modern theology substantially modified the doctrine which allows men to express to God the feelings and desires of the heart with invocation and ceremonials, provided it is done with simplicity and sincerity.

The indication here given of the religious source of prayer, as existing not in the words which it utters but in the feeling which inspires and accompanies it, is exemplified by a pretty Oriental legend, taken from the mystic Persian poet, Jalâl-ed-

dîn-Rumî. Moses, the story says, once heard a shepherd praying as follows: "O Lord show me where Thou art, that I may become Thy servant, may polish Thy boots and comb Thy hair." Moses reproved him sternly saying that God was a spirit and had no such needs as the ignorant shepherd attributed to Him. The shepherd then withdrew, silent and humiliated, into the desert. But Moses heard a voice from on high saying: "Why hast thou sent away My servant? Is it not thy duty to bring the people to Me? and have I not given men different ways of worshiping Me and different methods of praising Me? and do I look at the words they say and not at the heart which prompts them?"

It is in fact not so much by the words as by the feeling that we recognize eudaemonistic prayer as that in which materialistic interests are predominant, in which the stimulus of the organic life is stronger and more alive than any other. The words which prayer utters ought, under our classification, to serve as a sign of orientation and if they do not afford sufficiently clear evidence, it is to the doctrine on which the prayer is based that we must turn.

Among modern religious movements Christian Science takes up a characteristic position with its doctrine of prayer when it defines it not so much as prayer for health as thinking healthily. The exercise of reflection, meditation and contemplation here becomes an instrument for penetrating into the heart of prayer. Christian Science, in which the function of thought in the interests of health is the predominant note, demands in acute pain not a piercing cry but cold, clear meditation. But it does not draw any distinction between redemption from sin and redemption from sickness and death. Its doctrine of prayer, like that of most religions, does not show any difference in value between eudaemonistic prayer and ethical prayer. This doctrine in fact is without a philosophic basis independent of its religious system, and is therefore without any ground for drawing the above distinction.

It is only mysticism that is unable to derive from its principles

some ground for placing prayer that is devoted to obtaining material benefits on an equality with prayer which is devoted to obtaining spiritual benefits. The prayer of the mystic, so far from recognizing any such equality, digs a deep gulf between the two forms of prayer, a gulf that is bottomless, since such prayer aims, through concentration on spiritual values, at separating man from the world, without which separation mysticism would find the path closed to its final aspiration—union.

But so far it is sufficient for our purpose to have distinguished eudaemonistic prayer from every other type and to have indicated the psychological sources from which it derives its unmistakable and constant characteristics.

CHAPTER X

Aesthetic Prayer

The first light that is cast on the face of man as he issues from the dark struggles for dominion over the material world proceeds from beauty; and it is for this reason that art seems to be not unknown even among those—as recent researches help to prove—with whom practical interests would appear to have stifled every other craving of the spirit. When man has hardly made provision for his sustenance, and perhaps before he thinks about clothing, he concerns himself with adornment. This is the first smile of that art which makes his heart beat afresh, and from that time forward the way of entrancing beauty opens before him and a vast expanse of radiant sky reveals itself before his spirit.

It is by no mere accident that religion is associated with art. It lets a ray of the Divine penetrate into man's spirit under the guise of enchanting beauty. Art quickly becomes the queen of every heart, for passing over all the accidents of social distinctions it alone, as Taine[1] said, has in common with religion the gift of being able to offer what is highest to all indiscriminately.

The Philosophers accordingly have sometimes seen in art like Piero Martinetti[2] one form of the religious life; or, like John Austin, one of its essential elements. Some like Fries have understood religion as the faculty of discovering the eternal in the sublime and the beautiful, or like De Wette have termed religion itself a compound of two elements—truth and beauty.

But there is no need to fall into the exaggerations of those who

[1] Cf. H. Taine, *La Philosophie de l'Art*, Paris, 1885.
[2] Cf. *La Funzione religiosa della filosofia*, Pavia, 1907.

proceed to merge religion straight away in art. Kirkegaard has rightly pointed out the essential difference between religious emotion and aesthetic emotion, making it quite clear that the simultaneous appearance of art and religion, the perpetual inspiration which each draws from the other, finds its fundamental explanation in the nature of the human spirit itself, which in the contemplation of beauty has discovered a form of adoration and the fresh intoxicating fountain of aesthetic prayer.

It has been said that men have made idols because they are religious, but it would be truer, writes Alain,[3] to say that they are religious because they have made idols; and in fact the first meditation, the first contemplation has an idol for its object. Mythology is a poetic dramatization expressing the human relations of man with the nature of things. As the song of birds greets the day at its rising and as every spring greets the reawakening of nature in all her gorgeous beauty, so ancient worship was, from the first, contemplation and action in one. The first action was the sacred dance, and the first contemplation had for its object sacred action. That is why the dance accompanies prayer as though it were an imitation of it and why it is never found absent in any form of worship and indeed is so closely connected with it that in totemism it cannot be distinguished from worship itself.[4] And although on the richer plane of abstract thought we see the concrete presentation of the Divine gradually melt away and disappear, yet such presentation, or some substitute for it, is found to be needed for worship as an object for admiration and adoration, like some numinous attraction, some secret power the image of which is adored as a symbol. And if this image disappears, owing to the effort of reason to avoid all taint of anthropomorphism, or in order to arrive at the supreme reality of its qualities not from its personal substance but, as in Buddhism, from its inner principles, then it devolves upon the liturgy and religious art to fulfill the great task of satisfying man's aesthetic requirements.

[3] Cf. *Propos sur le Christianisme*, Paris, 1925.
[4] Cf. M. P. Nilsson, *Primitive Religion*, Tübingen, 1911.

From this point of view one may see how the whittling down of the figurative element does not really help religion; for as it thereby loses that touch with the popular spirit which is so indispensable it opens the door to the ready growth of superstition.

On the other hand religion, which stands supreme in the realm of the spirit, cannot leave on one side that sphere of activity which provides such joy and such ideal consolation to life; it cannot leave on one side that aesthetic activity, which from the beginning has provided for it the most delicate and enchanting flowers. That is why we observe in history that each particular religion creates an art of its own. It is sufficient to cast a glance at the growth of art and religion in the East and in the West to see that a subtle and indestructible bond indissolubly unites the one to the other. Religion tends to express through harmony of line, color and sound what cannot be translated into concepts, doctrines or rules of life; while art tends to draw from religion the inspiration of the sublime which it cannot find except in religious emotions.

Dance, music, song, the sacred functions which accompany prayer are therefore only an unconscious attempt to portray by plastic and pictorial art, through the sensations of profound aesthetic emotions, what prayer inadequately expresses through words. The origin of the sacred drama and of tragedy is perhaps to be found merely in a representational portraying of the expression of the divine life which words could not render in all its entirety. It is for this reason that man tends naturally to accompany his words, if not to portray them, with gestures; nor can he, without confusing their meaning, make gestures which are out of harmony with his words. The dramatization of prayer is only a more concrete expression of what religious emotion requires and what the words try in vain to express with their childish lisping. In order that prayer may be transformed into a language into which the whole soul seems to pour itself forth to unite with the Divine, it needs to be supported by the skilled aid of art.

J. W. Hauer[5] drives home forcibly the arguments for the religious origin of the dance and the drama, which in reality are, at their first appearance, simply religious ceremonies, symbols of divine revelation, means of attaining a condition of ecstasy and therefore a complete expression of prayer. One need but recall the ecstatic dances of early races or those of the Shamanists or the famous dances of Dervishes, or those of some Gnostic Christian sects or of the Russian Chibiasts or the Persian mystics, or the Dionysiac festivals, in order to see how they all contribute to portray prayer—the central function of religious activity. Beauty, which according to an expression of Fechner is the splendor of the soul of things and which perhaps might better be described as a bright ray of the Divine, never reveals so fully its function in life as in that almost irresistible force which bows men in adoration; and art, which according to Amiel is the manifestation of a soul which forgets itself in the eternal soul, finds consequently one of its most delicate and exalted tasks in making provision for the beauty of objects of worship. One might perhaps better describe it as the most powerful human activity directed toward making eternal the beauty which it adores.

The cry of pain, the longing for personal release which gave birth to eudaemonistic prayer are now silent and give place to ecstatic rapture, to adoring worship of the Divine, conceived as entrancing and sublime beauty.

Religion, and especially mysticism, tends to consider as its goal that sphere of man's religious life which, starting from the desire to obtain material welfare, reaches a point so exalted as to be beyond all human words and concepts and melts away and disappears in an ineffable sensation of knowledge and beauty.

Few are endowed with the natural capacity for attaining to this mystical sphere, but those religions which concentrate their whole scheme of knowledge and conduct upon its attainment—

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[5] Cf. *Die Religionen, ihr Werden, ihr Sinn, ihre Wahrheit,* Stuttgart, 1923.

whether it is called *nirvana* or the mystic rapture of the *visio beatifica*—offer to their adherents a complete system of psychotechnics, a whole range of spiritual exercises for producing the mystic experience; while in the more usual and popular forms of religion a whole series of dances, ceremonies, dramatizations, images, drinks and sacred foods, monuments and festivals are ordained in order that in the daily prescribed ritual of the community, as well as in the ascetic solitude of the cenobite, full opportunity may be offered to the worshiper for attaining to the joy of the divine life.

I repeat, therefore, that this remedy against one of the manifold forms of evil, a remedy which I have termed aesthetic,[6] does not arise from any accidental or contingent connection between art and religion. The observation of the well-known ethnologist Ratzel about art—that everywhere it is found associated with religion, and that if it is not to become a mere business it can only retain its life through religion—is not derived from an external knowledge of the facts, but traces back to their inmost roots those laws of harmony and beauty which cause rapt contemplation, adoration and prayer to be inseparable one from the other in the human soul.

This is well known by those missionaries who avail themselves of art in order to attract and render more susceptible to conversion the primitive so-called pagan people. The pains taken by experienced and learned missionaries, whether Catholic or Protestant, to replace pagan art by Christian in the sacred buildings and objects of worship has a sound psychological foundation. The character of the style of architecture, of pictures, of sculpture, of music and of sacred ceremonies, is closely bound up with the religious spirit of the races and civilizations which have produced them; and hence the replacement of one religion by another means to some extent the replacement of its art. It seems that missions to-day, basing themselves on the *a posteriori*

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[6] Cf. M. Puglisi, *Le Fonti religiose del Problema del Male*, Roma, 1917.

reasoning of experience, are beginning to detect in every art, whether in the East or the West, what they call "Rays of the eternal perfection of God;" [7] but by reason of the close harmony that exists between art and religion, and the relations which both have with the character and culture of the different peoples, when a religion is prescribed, an art must be prescribed as well, and the clearer and more definite the lines of the prescribed religion the more vividly must the art be presented.[8]

What we are specially concerned to bring out is the fact that aesthetic prayer arises from the indissoluble union of art and religion. The unexpected, the surprising, the overwhelming, the marvelous, the enthralling are qualities of the numinous. Admiration, contemplation, surprise, wonder, enthusiasm lead to veneration and adoration; and it is by those stages that we are brought directly to an explanation of the psychological origin of aesthetic prayer. Let us recall how the hero, the wonder-worker, the king, in the luminous halo which blinds the astonished and wondering gaze of the people, are rapidly transformed into mythical heroes, into objects of adoration, into demi-gods or even into deities incarnate. History teems with such instances.

But more characteristic are those instances which show that the mere perception of something which surpasses everything else in beauty stirs to adoration and an attitude of prayer. Garcilaso de la Vega tells us how the ancient Peruvians used to worship under the name of *luagas* everything which excelled other things of the same kind in excellence and beauty. Herodotus tells us how in a certain city of Sicily a youth was worshiped because of his great beauty, and how after his death they erected temples and altars to him. The story told in a Greek myth of Narcissus adoring his own beauty may be traced to a deep and universal truth; for even in this act may be traced the potent

[7] Cf. G. F. Hartland, *Kunst und Religion*, Leipzig, 1919.
[8] Cf. Ludwig Berg, *Die Katholike Heidenmission*, especially Vol. II, Part. 7, Aachen, 1924.

charm of beauty[9]—so that, as A. Maury[10] has pointed out, not only had the Greeks a regular cult of beauty but also everything that served to develop and beautify the body was for that reason looked upon by them as divine.

It is this enchanting beauty that inspired the enthusiastic paeans of the ancient Mexicans in their *haily*, of the Greeks in their cry ἀξις ταῦρε, of the ancient Romans in their *triumphe*, of the Scandinavians in their *tu-tul*—all enthusiastic cries which are only a rudimentary form of aesthetic prayer.

We can distinguish from every other type that form of prayer which is fed almost exclusively on religious emotions and which values beauty more highly than any other quality, or places it above every other in the contemplation of the Divine. "*Tu es pulcherrimus*," prays St. Augustine. "*Deus, intelligibiliter lux, in quo et a quo et per quem intelligibiliter lucent quae intelligibiliter lucent omnia.*" . . . "*Dulcissime, pulcherrime*," prays St. Anselm of Canterbury, "*tu melle dulcior, lacte et nive candidior, nectare suavior.*" "*Tu solus pulcherrimus et amantissimus*," prays the author of *The Imitation of Christ*. St. Theresa, as she prays, calls God the source of all beauty, and Peter of Alcantara extols Him as "the glorious day of eternity, sweetness of my heart, bright light of my inner being, celestial paradise of the soul." The Byzantine mystic Simeon prays in similar words: "Thou art the verdant paradise," he says. "Thou art joy, blessedness, splendor and delight." And Matilde of Magdeburg uses much the same words to express her ecstatic emotion before the Divine Beauty: "Mount of fire," she exclaims, "sweet sun, full moon, sun of my eyes, delight of my ears, harmony of words." One seems here to hear an echo of the hymn of Mânikka-Vâsaga, which says: "O unspotted splendor, wondrous flower, great light at which none can gaze, wave of delight, light of every fleeting ray"; or of the Upanishad-Maitrayanja, with the

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[9] Cf. F. A. Ferrari, *La Religione nel divenire humano*, Città di Castello, 1922; L. Luzzati, *La Libertà di Coscienza e di Scienza*, Milan, 1903; H. Taine, *La Philosophie de l'Art*, Paris, 1885.

[10] Cf. *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce antique*, Paris, 1857.

invocation to "the light of the night and the food of the spirit." "O Lord," says a Bahaist prayer, "let Thy beauty be my food and Thy presence my drink."

Perhaps Margaret Alacoque and Madame Guyon, when they said that in their prayers they felt like burning tapers or like lamps burning before God, rendering love for love, were trying to convey through an image the inexpressible delight of aesthetic prayer.

This passion for the beauty of holiness, this sweet torment, was early felt by Michelangelo:

> Ah! grant that Thee I everywhere may see!
> If I at mortal beauty feel afire,
> Before Thy flame shall my whole soul expire
> And in that flame myself engulfed shall be,
> Dear Lord, on Thee alone I call, on Thee
> In this vain torment of my blind desire.

But the consciousness of aesthetic emotion feels not only delight and torment but also a creative impulse toward action. The gods of heaven, to whom some historians of religion, such as Pettazzini,[11] would trace back the origin of monotheism, prefer to be worshiped under the blue vault of heaven and in lovely mountain spots, where there can be greater meditation and where the distance which separates man from the wonderful object of adoration seems to be less. Such gods are to be seen in Ahura Mazda (who in his celestial origin corresponds to the Vedic Varuna and the pre-Vedic Dyaus), in Zeus among the Greeks, in Jupiter among the Latins, in Tiu among the Germans, Perun among the Slavs and Perkun among the Lithuanians. When Moses desires to hear the voice of God, on behalf of his people he withdraws to the lofty peaks of Sinai. The mystery of the Fatherhood of God and of his own mission in the world is revealed to Jesus in the inspiring solitude of an oriental landscape. Near a solitary mountain close to Mecca Mahomet was

[11] Cf. *Le Problème du Monotheisme* in "Actes du Congrès International d'histoire des Religions," Paris, 1925.

called by Allah to be the Messiah. Amidst the deserted rocks of La Verna St. Francis thought out his message of love. And besides these a countless host of souls have learned to find, on high mountain solitudes or in shady valleys or in bare cells or as they gaze over a stretch of mountain or plain, the ineffable emotion of aesthetic prayer.

This type of prayer, which is almost entirely unknown in the lowest grades of civilization, springs into life as man begins to quit the tumultuous life of cities for the simple life of the fields, and finds its constant source of inspiration in the living beauty of nature and in the wonderful creations of art which the religious ideal itself suggests and inspires. It was not without reason that Lamartine said that poetry was prayer and Ruskin made a religion of beauty. Raphael Lambruschini—who had a deep sense of the importance of religion and of acts of worship and at the same time a strong aesthetic sense and a profound knowledge of the influence of the sense of beauty on religious emotion—loved to worship in the open, on the large terrace of his country estate, in sight of the magnificent scenery of the Upper Val d'Arno, which is dominated by the hill of San Cerbone, on the spot where he had accustomed his pupils to feel the presense of God as completely as in the sanctuary of the conscience and the course of human events.[12] Before the spectacle of the manifestations of inexhaustible and manifold life Amiel felt in the country, as Pythagoras did in the movement of the stars, a gigantic divine symphony. "I have surrendered myself completely," he says, "to life and nature; and they have rocked me in their arms with infinite tenderness. To open oneself to this eternal purity of nature and to let this immortal life flow in is the same as listening to the voice of God." Rousseau prays on the mountains of Chambéry and owns that he has never prayed with such fervor and has for the first time seen "God in His works, while lifting up his heart to Him." Malvida von Meysenbug says that she first discovered the inner meaning

[12] Cf. R. Lambruschini, *Conferenze religiose e preghiere inedite* with preface and notes by A. Gambaro, Venice, 1926.

of prayer when looking upon the boundless expanse of the sea. Renan, when he had become insensible to the emotions of the faith of his youth, was moved to heartfelt prayer by the sight of the Acropolis. The greatest poets pray in their poems, if they are inspired by that religious emotion which is aroused by the beauty of all creation, the solemn quivering of the vast starry vault or the azure expanse of ocean, that outward and invisible sign of the Infinite. A prayer is breathed by soft and solemn music in the austere devotion of a church, nor can Kepler close his great work without thanking God "for having enabled him to experience the joys and ecstatic raptures of His heavens."

Anyone who has felt emotions such as these can understand why the Chassidin preferred to withdraw for prayer into the grassy fields, under the blue sky, on a soft variegated carpet of flowers, in the silent shade of majestic trees. When the Divine sinks into the mind through the hidden channels of beauty—whether of nature or of art—prayer rises on light wing and quickly reaches, through contemplation and adoration, the brightest peaks. In a similar state of mind Tauler feels his soul unfold itself before God, and La Chantal feels it breathe in silence with the breath of love, in the immediate presence of Him who waketh in darkness.

This is a prostration of the creature before the Infinite and the Unapproachable, an acute sense of one's own finiteness; but it is also the joy of grasping that ineffable beauty which finds its richest utterance in aesthetic prayer.

Two paths lie before that type of prayer. On the one side it hastens toward the ecstasy of self-abandonment and mystic death, toward the dissolution of the praying spirit in a luminous ray of pure beauty. On the other side it presses on laboriously through grief to the joy of life. When the Divine manifests itself in the blaze of sunshine or in the raging storm, in the serene frankness of the soul of a child, in the tender embrace of a wife or in the loving and thoughtful eyes of a mother, the voice that rises from the heart is a hymn, a resounding hymn, of the joy of life.

CHAPTER XI

Noetic Prayer

Noetic prayer is the result of another activity of the spirit. Not being limited by the eudaemonistic aim of self-preservation it is the special expression of the vital impulse for acquiring the highest knowledge. Also, not being limited by the vision of external beauty it can wander at will amid the experiences of visible and invisible reality, not stopping or diverging or making effort to enjoy forms and colors and sounds but sinking itself, drinking in delight and gaining fresh life in that ineffable truth in which Clement of Alexandria maintained that the source of all prayer was to be found.

With noetic prayer we have reached the outer boundaries of the irrational and enter the realm of the rational with all its marvelous developments. From the moment when man, spurred on by the worrying anxiety of physical evil, has found in eudaemonistic and aesthetic prayer two powerful instruments for emancipation and consolation, he is bound as he proceeds with the gradual coördination of his knowledge and experience to appeal to the light, the source of knowledge, from which he has seen so much benefit accrue to him, whether for eudaemonistic ends or for those of aesthetic enjoyment.

Of the intellectual remedies which religion offers for raising man above the limits of his customary knowledge and the perils of ignorance and error, something more may be said than has been said of physical and aesthetic remedies. On the one hand we have man's curiosity, when confronted with events which impress him by their numinous character, and the reaction of his intelligence when faced with the mystery of beginnings and

final ends; on the other hand we have his practical interest in piercing the secrets of causes and laws in order to obtain control over adverse forces, since the better they are understood the more they can be controlled. It may be said that in a certain sense all remedies are the result of learning and therefore that the foundation of remedies must be the result of knowledge.

But intellectual remedies are not in such general use as others, whether because it is not everyone who readily arrives at them unaided or because the interests of the great mass of men are more practical than theoretical, more in action than in thinking, more in knowing how to act so as not to come into conflict with the hostile forces of which the world is full than of knowing the essential nature of the soul and the gods. Hence it comes about that those supreme truths are confided to a special class of men who are esteemed sacred.

Experience teaches primitive man that weapons increase his power, that he can cross rivers more safely if he makes use of the trunk of a tree, that he can keep water in vessels baked in the sun to use in time of drought. But what is learned slowly or is stored in the great reservoir of tradition offers nothing remarkable to primitive man. It is only when he finds himself faced with a phenomenon which transcends his ordinary experiences, a phenomenon which he cannot repeat or bring within the compass of his thoughts or control by his own efforts, that there arises within him the worrying consciousness of the limitations of his knowledge and his power, and that he therefore feels a theoretical interest not only in knowing for knowing's sake but also in controlling and turning to his own use the malevolent forces that surround him on every side. All that is painful, alarming and injurious, writes F. de Sarlo,[1] all that is prejudicial to the preservation and development of life, prejudicial to existence, all that is discouraging in the world that surrounds us could not but provoke a reaction tending to show that the need for supremacy, for freedom, is not a mere illusion and

[1] Cf. F. de Sarlo, *L'attività pratica e la Coscienza morale*, Florence, 1901.

that man is furnished with means sufficient to resist the menacing and destructive forces. Observing such phenomena as catalepsy, ecstasy, seeing and hearing at a distance, clairvoyance and telepathy must further in no small degree the attributing to those who have experienced them (for example heads of families and tribes, kings, former ancestors, savior heroes and creators of civilization) a position of special relationship with occult powers, and ascribing to them a secret wisdom which the mass of men cannot share except through their intervention.

Primitive conceptions of cosmogony represent man's original state as dominated by ignorance. Afterwards, we are told, superior beings penetrated into the kingdom of chaos and darkness, in order to enlighten the mind of man by teaching him what he required to know; and wisdom according to the esoteric thought of those early days (which was not very different from that of Hellenistic times), was deemed to be the source of all blessings and was compared to the light of day. These illuminated beings, whether creators of civilizations, savior heroes or founders of tribes and religions, are not only discoverers of what is supremely useful to man, such as fire and fruit trees, but are also wise men and legislators. The origin of wisdom in the old cosmogonies is therefore divine and it is only communicated to man by means of privileged beings, who are themselves filled with wisdom's treasures.[2]

It has been said that mythology is the first reservoir for collecting the conjectures of science in the childish age of the world. But instead of using experimental analysis it describes, and by means of mythical allegory explains, the origin of the world, the laws of nature, the movements of the sun, moon and stars, the origin of sickness and death, how darkness and light came into the world and how evil found its way into the earth and the human body.[3]

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[2] One may recall the characteristic materialistic conception of primitive races of which Richard Kreglinger speaks in his book *L'Evolution religeuse de l'Humanité*, Paris, 1926.

[3] Cf. J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, London, 1925; Andrew Lang, *Myths, Ritual and Religion*, London, 1895.

Mythology tries to satisfy both sides of the noetic activity, the theoretic and the practical side. And since it is not sufficient to have traditions, myths, legends, monuments and sacred books, but it is necessary also to have more immediate and living sources of wisdom and power, we have the rise of the wise man, the man who knows the causes of evil, the wonder-worker, the wizard, the magician, the priest—the superman, in fact. Primitive mentality chooses him preferably from the neuropathic and the epileptic, as is done to-day in the case of the native priests of Chili, the Shamanists of Mongolia, the Jongleurs of India, the Gangas of Africa and the greater part of those to whom primitive mentality ascribes the power of reading the hidden mysteries of things and of human destiny.

From these primitive beliefs there grows up a complicated system of secret arts, directed toward increasing the knowledge and power of man so that he may gain control over evil. The foreteller of events and worker of wonders can read the secret spell that binds man's destiny and can come to terms with the secret powers on which it depends. "Geomancy" gives the power of learning from marks in metals and minerals what the ordinary man does not know and what he needs in order to pierce the secret of his destiny. "Hydromancy" teaches him to read it in water, "aeromancy" in the air, "pyromancy" in the red tongues of flame, while "haruspicy" spells out the obscure and mysterious words written in the entrails of animals, as for example Etruscan lore which sees them written in their livers. When the souls of the dead come to be thought capable of communicating suggestions that will help the living, "necromancy" arises; and when the movement or the unusual appearance of heavenly bodies is correlated with some event, whether as foretelling or accompanying it, astrology is created. But all these arts, which are associated with the decadent phases of religious development, teach one fundamental lesson. They say to man: if thou desirest to free thyself from the ignorance which crushes thee, if thou wishest to free thyself from the threat of physical evils and of sin, thou must know the paths of the secret world.

Religion possessed all the historical and psychological qualities for becoming the most authoritative institution for imparting that knowledge which was capable of satisfying the intellectual requirements of the masses, while offering them at the same time adequate machinery for protecting themselves against evils, controlling those evils, defeating them and getting rid of them, and also for obtaining that greatest good, most ardently desired by the human heart—eternal happiness.

In contrast with philosophy, which disputes the possession of this field with the institution of religion, religion is not the privileged occupation of an aristocratic class of thinkers specially fitted for such an enterprise. It merely requires a man to obey its precepts and carry out its rules in order to enter straight away, and with the minimum expenditure of force, into the possession of the utmost wisdom and power. The outstanding characteristic of the wisdom that is brought to the masses by the institution of religion is precisely that of its universal accessibility, for everyone who is favored by divine grace or is gifted with "good will" has the way of access open to him. It is true that mythology has pictured wisdom as a tree of marvelous beauty producing the fruit of curses, pain and death; but the same tree produces also the fruit of life, and one of the most choice and delicious fruits, whether inside or outside the range of religious institutions, is that prayer which we call "noetic."

The uncertainties of terminology have given rise to various definitions of this type of prayer, which is focused and merged in fullness of knowledge—insight, as Böhme said, into the mind of God, feeling oneself filled with His virtues. This appears at one time as intellectual light, bathing the soul in mystic death; at another time as a source of power, urging forward to a fuller expansion of life.

Jeremy Taylor[4] has described noetic prayer as the transition from intense meditation to that contemplation which attains to

[4] Cf. *Life of Christ*, 1649.

the vision of the wonders of God, as the human soul enters the realm of the divine light. Von Hügel defines it as the renovation and purification of the soul in a wider life gained by contact with the eternal source of power. F. B. Pratt views this form of prayer as a bond of union or association, an experience of fuller life, an inexhaustible source of strength.[5] F. O. Beth sees it well up in the heart at the Divine Presence, which is felt as a spring of wisdom.[6] William James, although he gives such copious instances of the experience of direct relationship between the soul and God,[7] does not succeed in probing to the depths this relationship. Not infrequently it appears as the need for addressing an ideal spectator, the boundlessness of whose nature one dimly realizes—the longing to pass beyond the world of contingent truths and sink and lose oneself in those that are absolute and eternal. This is what Robert Barclay called intuition of the highest knowledge, issuing, as Isaac Penington adds, from the spirit of truth, through which a man, as he prays, perceives, not externally, by means of words and arguments, but internally and intuitively, that which was slumbering within him. Recognizing God as he emerges from the depths of his soul he calls upon His light and His truth for this life and for the next.

These descriptions of noetic prayer, and others like them, enable us to understand that it is in reality the expression of an intuition of the divine wonders, by means of which man, as he prays, enters the realm of the prime source of intellectual light. He loses himself in the Divine, in the revelation of a tremendous and enthralling mystery, in the inexhaustible fountain of wisdom, and feels its inevitable thrill. He no longer considers the world from the point of view of its effects, but piercing through to the First Cause he perceives those effects as issuing from that

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[5] Cf. F. B. Pratt, *Psychology of Religious Belief*, New York, 1907.

[6] Cf. F. O. Beth, *Study of Prayer*, which gives several examples of noetic prayer.

[7] W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, London, 1903.

same source of life from which everything flows before it breaks up into time and space and presents itself to the dull materiality of ordinary vision.

When the mystics wished to tell us what position should be assigned to that prayer which we call noetic, they told us that it stands at the highest point of the ascent of the soul toward God, and they described the emotions and the blessings which it brings. St. Bernardino of Siena describes to us twelve degrees of Divine Love, the last being that in which man obtains the mental peace which comes from the human mind resting in God.

Bianco of Siena recognizes no other prayer than the noetic. His poem says:

> What is prayer but upward turning
> Of the mind to God direct
> By the gracious touch of God?
> What is prayer but mental yearning
> Heart's joy, light of intellect?

St. Catherine of Siena, in her 26th Letter, distinguishes with her customary insight what she calls mental prayer from every other kind of prayer.

> Prayer is of three kinds [she says]. One is continuous; in other words it is that continuous holy desire which prays in the sight of God through that which thou doest . . . and therefore is called continuous. The other form is vocal prayer, which is used when the Holy Office or other prayers are said. This is so ordered as to arrive at the third kind of prayer—mental prayer—in which is reaped the fruit of the labors which were borne in the imperfect form of vocal prayer. . . . It rises above itself, that is, above the grosser feelings of sense, and with angelic mind unites with God through the glow of love, and with the light of intellect it sees and knows and robes itself in truth.

The emotions which the mystic feels in noetic prayer have been described by Jacopone da Todi and St. Catherine of Genoa. For both the emotion of this form of prayer is something ineffable; so much so that Jacopone da Todi calls this state of prayer the "ineffable state." He writes:

Light indescribable! Who shall describe thee,
Thou that in darkness hast chosen to hide?
Him that in measures would fain circumscribe thee—
Bound thee, the boundless—thy Light doth not guide.

* * * * * * *

Whoso doth find thee, so heavenward soareth,
Nought can he show, nought in utterance spell;
Yet do I marvel how still thy Light poureth
Fresher and fuller than mortal can tell.
Ne'er can it fall into darkness away;
Sin yields to love, e'en as night yields to day.

As the air shines when the sun on it beameth,
As at the fire the dim taper reglows,
So shineth man when that Light on him streameth,
Sinks his own action, his own will forgoes.
Wholly transformed, he his whole self doth give,
Conquered he conquereth, dying doth live.

St. Catherine of Genoa thus describes this kind of prayer in Chapter IX of her life:

> When, therefore, the creature sees itself cleansed and purified and transformed into God, then is truth and purity seen; and of that sight, which is beyond all sight, one cannot speak or think. At length I can only say, "My God, mine altogether, everything is mine; for all that is of God seems to me all mine."

It is clear that the dominant note in noetic prayer is the impression of light, an indescribable light, which man receives as

he prays. This note becomes sometimes positively exasperating, as in the *Prayer to the Trinity* of St. Catherine of Siena, where the word "light" is constantly repeated, while aesthetic motives are added to the noetic. Take again this prayer in her "Dialogue of the Divine Providence" [8]:

> Thou dost illuminate me (it says) with Thy light Thou hast made me to know Thy truth. Thou art that light above every light, with which light Thou dost give to the eye of the understanding supernatural light—in such abundance and perfection that Thou dost make light the light of faith, in which faith I see that my soul has life and in this life receiveth Thee, O Light. In the light of faith I gain wisdom—the wisdom of the Word of Thy Son; in the light of faith I am strong, faithful and persevering; in the light of faith I hope; it never lets me faint by the way. This light teaches me the path, and without this light I should go in darkness. Therefore I said to Thee, O Eternal Father, that Thou shouldest illumine me with the light of the most holy faith. Verily this light is a sea; for the soul floats in Thee, the peaceful sea, the eternal Trinity. The water is clear and therefore has no fear; for it knows the truth; it is purified because it shows secret things; and, where the abundance of Thy light abounds, it stamps the soul of him who believes. It is a mirror, by which Thou, O eternal Trinity, teachest me that, as I look into that mirror and hold it with the hand of love, it shows me myself in Thee, (for I am Thy creature) and it shows me in Thee through the Mirror which Thou didst make with the Deity in our humanity. In this light I know myself and show myself to Thee, highest and infinite Good. Good above every good, O priceless Good, blessed Good, incomprehensible Good. Beauty above every Beauty; Wisdom above every Wisdom; Thou art indeed Wisdom itself. O Thou food of the angels, with the flame of love Thou hast given Thyself to man. Thou art the garment which clothest

[8] Chap. 167.

the naked, Thou feedest the hungry with Thy sweetness. Thou art sweet without any bitterness. O eternal Trinity, in Thy light which Thou wakest in me, I, as I receive it with the light of the most holy faith, have known, as I make plain the way of high perfection, that in light and not in darkness do I serve Thee, that I am a mirror of the good and holy life and that thus I raise myself from my own miserable life; that it is through my own shortcomings that I have always served Thee in darkness. I have not known Thy truth and therefore I have not loved it. Why did I not know Thee? Because I did not see Thee in the light of the most holy faith, since the cloud of self-love darkened the eye of my understanding. And Thou, eternal Trinity, didst with Thy light disperse the darkness. But who can ascend up to Thee and render Thee thanks for Thy boundless gift, the bounteous benefits that Thou hast bestowed on me, the doctrine of truth which Thou hast imparted to me? For it is a special gift to me, over and above the general gift which Thou makest to other created beings. Thou didst deign to condescend to my needs and to those of other mortals who shall be reflected in that doctrine. Thou dost answer, O Lord; Thou hast given Thyself, and Thou Thyself doth answer and give satisfaction, pouring into me a light of thankfulness, so that with that light I give Thee thanks. Clothe me with Thyself, eternal Truth, so that I may pass through this mortal life in true obedience and in the light of Thy most holy faith, that light which seems to intoxicate my soul anew.

The vision in which *light* predominates is the vision given by noetic prayer. The light is intellectual rather than aesthetic; and that is why it can be identified with darkness, as in the prayer of the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Nowhere, perhaps, is the irrational phase of noetic prayer so visible as in those pages of the *Mystical Theology*,[9] in which the pseudo-Dionysius calls upon God as the One who is above all things,

[9] Chaps. I-V.

the supremely unknowable, the dazzling darkness, the One who is above all vision and all knowledge. To the pseudo-Dionysius not seeing and not knowing is the same as seeing and knowing truly. His way to knowledge is the negative way, as it must be with every attempt to rationalize the irrational; and it is thus that he attains to "that ignorance that is hidden from all human knowledge and we contemplate the superessential darkness which is hidden from the light that is in all things." "By penetrating into the darkness which is above the intellect," he continues, "we shall reach through not only to fleeting words but to perfect silence and to ignorance." God being for him "neither not-Being nor Being" no mortal being can know Him as He is in Himself; "nor does He," adds the pseudo-Dionysius, "know beings as they are." "Of God there can be no speech, nor name, nor knowledge. He is not darkness nor light, not error nor truth. Of Him there can be neither affirmation nor negation; for above every affirmation and negation is the sole and perfect cause of all that is free from everything and transcends everything." For the pseudo-Dionysius, therefore, prayer must arise from the "free, absolute and pure detachment from oneself and from all things, quitting everything and being released from everything," in order to rise to the superessential way of the "divine obscurity." "Sublime obscurity," he says, in his attempt to rationalize the irrational, "shot through with beams of marvelous brightness, which, beyond all touch and vision, flood the minds that are blinded by a splendor surpassing all other beauty."

Without citing other examples offered by mystics in their descriptions of what I have called noetic prayer, we may now distinguish three different features which it shows: (1) a desire or burning love which impels it to seek for the truth, (2) an ineffable joy in possessing truth and receiving its benefits, and (3) lastly (a feature which it shares with eudaemonistic and aesthetic prayer) a feeling of profound gratitude.

We frequently find invocations addressed to the Divine as that truth and intellectual light which it is desired to possess: "*Te invoco, Deus veritas,*" prays St. Augustine, "*Deus pater*

veritatis, pater sapientiae, Deus intelligibilis lux." These invocations are usually preceded by prayers expressing the desire to be able to love the truth and hence the desire to possess it. These expressions of desire are the most frequent.

Among souls grievously oppressed by the consciousness of their own darkness, and attracted at the same time by the irresistible fascination exercised by the light of wisdom, none has described this state of mind better than Frederick Nietzsche in his *Hymn to the Unknown God*:

Ich will dich kennen, Unbekannten,
du tief in meine Seele Greifender,
mein Leben wie ein Sturm Durchschweifender,
du Unfassbarer mir Verwandter!
Ich will dich kennen, selbst dir dienen.

In recalling the prayers of men who ask God for grace to love the truth which they are seeking, and ask in the full consciousness not of subjection but of the liberty that truth bestows, we should not forget the prayer of Scotus Erigena:

> O Thou who art the eternal essence of things, beyond space and time and everywhere in the realm of being, O Thou who dost transcend all things and dost everywhere pervade them, reveal Thyself to me, grant that, even in the shadows of our ignorance, we may feel Thee and seek Thee. Stretch forth Thy hand and help him who without Thee cannot come to Thee. Reveal Thyself to us, who seek nought else but Thee.

The soul of Vittoria Colonna is overwhelmed as she gazes into the bottomless depths of that divine wisdom for which the wise men of this world have prayed:

From the pure depths of Thy true light
  Thy friendly rays, O loving Lord,
  Turn on that strong, that base ants' horde
Who, worldly-wise, their hearts lock tight.

Their ignorance shatter, dark as night,
That walls them in; from shades abhorred,
Adam's chill curse, O lead them, Lord,
To heavenly radiance, calm and bright.

Tommaso Campanella directs a prayer for intellectual light to the "Primeval Mind":

O Primal Mind, do Thou my mind enlighten,
Whose wisdom doth the universe inspire;
Love's primal right,
Power's primal might,
Create all power, all love; my whole desire
Is toward Thee; do Thou my dull words brighten.

Necessity's true course
Is e'er by power controlled
And harmony's by love;
But fate and law alike Thy hand doth hold
Thou rulest love, Thou curbest might; Thy force
Hath power all powers above;
Thou art the judge, Thou of all Truth the source.

There is much beauty in the prayer of Niccolo Tommaseo, in which he gives utterance to his desire to love that Truth which he identifies with God:

I will rise from the darkness [it reads] the Lord is my light: from mountain to plain, from river to sea, His rays extend. May His rays shine on our restored cities, on our cleansed streets, on the smiling dwellings of the poor; may they shine as peacemakers over the gates of our enemies. May Thy word, O Lord, be within us like drops of dew on the grass. May we rise with the sun to bless Thee, O Lord. I pray Thee that the truth may guide and comfort me this day and always. Grant that I may love Thy truth, guide and comfort me this day and always. Grant that I may love Thy truth, O Thou who givest light to man.

The desire for divine light is also beautifully expressed in a prayer of Savonarola, who says: "Give us this day the bread of Thy word; open our eyes, O Lord, that we may see that which was written in Thy prophets and Thy evangelists." The same desire is expressed in a prayer of Newman: "O my God, I acknowledge that Thou alone, Thou alone, canst lighten my darkness; shine through it, then, O Lord, and reveal Thyself."

A vision of the blessings which are derived from acquiring divine truth is already vouchsafed in the Avesta: "O Lord of all good things, Thou who givest us purity of life, grant that we may be able to know the Good by preaching it and teaching it to all living beings." It is seen still more clearly in the *Imitation of Christ,* in the following passage: "Blessed is the man whom Eternal Truth teacheth, not by obscure figures and transient sounds, but by a direct and full communication! . . . For of One Word are all things; and all things, without voice or language, speak Him alone: He is that divine principle which speaketh in our hearts." Here the truth of God, in comparison with human knowledge, is conceived as something substantial and as the originating source. In fact without it, as the author of the *Imitation of Christ* adds, no one could understand and judge rightly. Therefore he prays: "O God who art the Truth, make me one with Thee in everlasting love! . . . Let all teachers be silent, let the whole creation be dumb before Thee, and do Thou only speak unto my soul!"

The refreshing and intoxicating sweetness of the possession of truth is differently described in different prayers. Sometimes it is expressed by means of simple emphatic ejaculations, like that of St. Francis of Assisi "*Tu es sapientia, tu es gaudium et laetitia*", or that of David of Hapsburg: "Thou art the depth of all uncreated wisdom, Thou art the Supreme Wise One"; or that of Peter of Alcantara, who calls God "the brightest light of my inmost essence"; or St. Theresa of Jesus, who appeals to Him as the eternal wisdom; or the Byzantine mystic, Simeon, who recognizes Him as "the inextinguishable torch of holiness"; or Matilda of Magdeburg, who invokes Him as "unfathomable

wisdom, the wisdom of every teacher, the teaching of every wisdom"; or finally Mânikka-Vâchakar, who traces God in the supreme qualities of an ineffably fine intellect and of profound conviction. At other times it is expressed by means of more or less detailed descriptions of the precious possession of truth, and the beneficent experiences and consequences which result from it.

Examples of noetic prayer of this last type have been bequeathed to us by St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis de Sales and others. I may mention also the prayer of Angelus Silesius:

> Du erleuchtest alles gar,
> was jetzt ist und kommt und war;
> voller Pracht
> wird die Nacht,
> weil dein Glanz sie angelacht.

And Scheffler adds: "Fragst du wie Gott, das Wort, in einer Seele wohne, so wisse: wie das Licht der Sonnen in der Welt." Tersteegen describes in the most exquisite lines the sweetness and peace which flood his soul when God comes to him in spirit and in truth; and then he prays for power to make of himself and of the world an altar for God's presence:

> Herr, komm in mich wohnen, lass mein Geist auf Erden
> Dir ein Heiligtum noch werden;
> komm, Du nahes Wesen, Dich in mir verkläre.

And comparing the supreme wisdom with that of the world he recognizes that he has never found the truth, but only its appearances: for the truth is found no where else except in God:

> Dort Bilder, hier das Wesen.

And therefore he prays:

> Du bist ein Licht, und wohnst im Licht:
> ach, mach mich licht und rein,
> dass ich kann schauen dein Gesicht,
> und dir werd ganz gemein.

Few have expressed in such musical lines as Max von Schenkendorf the inner, filial emotion which the praying soul feels before the words of the Heavenly Father:

Hätte ich Flügel, hätte ich Flügel,
flög ich auf zu meinen Stern,
über Meere, Täler, Hügel,
sonder Schränke, sonder Zügel,
folgt ich immer meinen Herrn.

Still und selig mit Marien
ihm zu Füssen säss ich da,
immer möcht' ich vor ihm knieen,
in mich seine Worte ziehen,
hätte ich immer hold und nah.

The fear of losing the words of wisdom or of losing hold of the divine light, when once it has been gained, shows itself in this last line. It is repeated in many noetic prayers, as for instance in those of Adam Thebesius, who asks that the true light of the word of the Lord may never be extinguished in the human heart:

O Herr, dein Wort, das wahre Licht,
lass ja bei uns auslöschen nicht.

Especially frequent, in the prayers of those who have experienced the benefits of this divine light, is that giving of thanks, an example of which we find in the prayer contained in the so-called "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles": "We give thanks to Thee, O Father, for the life and the knowledge which Thou hast made known to us through the mediation of Jesus, Thy Son."

Being thus affected by that particular activity of the spirit from which it takes its name and being directed toward an ideal source of intellectual light and wisdom, noetic prayer fills a very important position in the development of the cognitive faculty. It is no mere chance that countless primitive gods are

worshiped under the symbol of light; it is no mere chance that the creative fancy of very ancient myths has represented the sun as a wise and an all-seeing being. The traditional name too, under which ancient religions pray to it, suggests the light of wisdom. "May I see the light" is the prayer of thousands and thousands of souls that are painfully conscious of living in darkness. Its bright rays are still found as a background to the heads of countless heroes and saints, and its symbol survives in architecture, in images and sacred objects; because on every side men long for one of its rays, the creative and life-giving breath of its undying flame. All the gods of Egypt, Babylonia, India and Persia are not only very powerful but also clothed in dazzling light, unless indeed they themselves give forth the light. "Glory to Thee who dost possess the most supreme understanding, O guide who givest security to the world," runs a Buddhist hymn. "O Thou who dost illume the darkness and scatterest ignorance," adds another hymn.[10] It is no mere chance, I repeat, that man has pictured divinity under the form of light and under the form of truth, and has raised his fervent prayers to Truth; for he himself has the love of truth implanted in his heart—a love which can find satisfaction nowhere else but in knowledge and intellectual light. Let us recall a story from the Gospels. The people are passing along the streets of Jericho with shouts and cheers. A poor blind man stands apart by himself and asks the reason for these joyous cries. He is told that One is passing by for whom the nations have ben waiting, the Messiah. He calls out to him, "O Son of David," and when Jesus draws near and asks him, "What wilt thou of me? What wilt thou that I should do to thee, thou poor blind man?" he makes reply: "Grant that I may see the light." And that is the reply of every soul that is seeking to obtain its most vital food.

The obtaining of this intellectual food is in fact the cause of all human progress; and of all the religious spirits of the day no one that I know of has expressed better than Ruysbroeck this

[10] Cf. *Lalita Vistara* in the Indian Library.

double aspect of noetic prayer—the psychological and the metaphysical.

> Few men attain to the divine contemplation [he says] because of our incapacity and the mystery of the light in which contemplation takes place. But he who is united to God and initiated into this truth can understand the truth of himself; because to conceive and understand God apart from any symbol and as He is in Himself is to be God with God, without any intermediary and without any otherness from Him that can possibly become an obstacle or a source of error. He, however, who would thus understand must die to himself and live in God; and then he will turn his face toward the eternal light in the depths that lie at the back of his spirit, where the hidden truth reveals itself without intermediary. For the Heavenly Father desires that we should see and that is why He is ever saying to our inmost spirit one deep unfathomable word and nothing else.

Prayer, as we have seen, arose from an impulse for the expansion of life, halting at the outset with the maintenance and increase of material power, but entering a great path of progress when panting after freedom and triumph over limitations, thirsting for a Divine Reality, it transcended the experience of the numinous as a supreme beauty and could reach, beyond that encircling wreath of irrationalism, the fair and fragrant blossoms of reasoned thought, that so it might present itself before the throne of the Divine Wisdom.

CHAPTER XII

Ethical Prayer

There are two senses in which one may speak of the remedies provided by religion for freeing man from moral evil. One has regard to the pedagogic value of religion in the training of character, in inculcating love of good and hatred of evil, in inspiring loyalty, obedience, constancy, resignation, heroism. The other has regard to the value which its teachings may have as a guide to conduct. In the former sense religion succeeds in gradually training the will and cultivating moral feeling; in the latter it teaches what to love and hate, what is allowed and what forbidden, what should be done so as not to fall into guilt and sin.

Looked at from this point of view, religion is seen as a rule of action for preventing the outbreak of evils which threaten the individual or the community, a rule which must be strictly observed by the faithful; and at the same time it is seen as a collection of teachings and precepts which, claiming to be the product of a mysterious body of superior beings, assume a position of supreme authority.

Belief in a *totem* involves obligations which limit freedom of choice, e.g. those which regulate exogamy. It also involves duties toward the totemic ancestor and toward the members of a clan or tribe, with which each of the constituent members claim to be united by magic process or by some mystic relationship. The moral value of these regulations, confined as it often is to the duty of carrying them out, is due entirely to an idealization of the regulation itself as belonging to a sacred order of things. Gradually as primitive experiences come within the close and tenacious grip of reason, as they are examined in the light of a

clearer ethical vision, which springs from the depths of consciousness the divine is enriched by what is considered to be more noble and morally higher.

I am well aware that the religious customs and precepts of certain primitive peoples have led to the denial to them of all moral feeling at a certain stage of human development. It has been said that religious feeling has arisen at a certain point of space and time through external influences and by the express sanction of the community. But as a matter of fact, as I have said above, if we deny that man is naturally predisposed to the apprehension of the Divine we are inevitably led to a position in which it is impossible to explain the origin of religion. The same may be said of those who deny that intellectual interests and aesthetic and ethical feelings are implanted deep in the human spirit and based on some very special quality to which alone is due the rise of art, science and morality. The denial of this quality and of the specific reactions of our spirit to the world of reality would lead inevitably to the impossibility of showing not only why but also how man succeeded in framing an ideal for his conduct and then attached such importance to it that he ascribed it to his remote ancestors, to supreme beings, to savior heroes and founders of civilization. It would lead us to suppose that religious precepts (which were originally thought to have been received from communications or revelations of those supreme beings) were afterwards regarded as the best product of the plowed soil of culture. Whereas, if man had in reality no supreme inborn capacity for systematizing the teachings of morality he would have been involved in a veritable labor of Sisyphus, climbing up again and again in order to find even still more remote that final authority which he could never reach.

In any case it cannot be denied that the aesthetic, the noetic and the ethical functions of religion, are, like the eudaemonistic, developed within the orbit of those psychical activities which I have called fundamental. As it is religion's natural prerogative to exert its influence over the whole range of the human spirit it can never contemplate that its teachings should offend against

or detract from the ethical feelings of its votaries. From the very beginning therefore human acts have been designated by the teaching of religion as lawful or unlawful, good or bad, useful or harmful.[1] And since men have had from the earliest times the conception of a hidden world, from which they could not escape, it was necessary, if they wished to derive the fullest advantage from it, to bring back their thoughts and actions into harmony with the invisible powers; and hence morality, or rather the regulations for human conduct, could never, from the very start of religion, dispense with the sanction of these powers.

Prayer is one of religion's main moral duties. As a means of salvation it is indispensable to religion. But it is clear that if it is to preserve its character of morality it must at every phase keep in harmony with the moral character of the religious object to which it is directed, or with that conception of the world and of life within which it operates. Thus prayer quickly becomes, for the institution of religion, a powerful educational instrument. And it so continues until some conflict arises between the ethical and the religious standard, until the ethical consciousness succeeds in viewing actions apart from the sacred aspect which religious teaching has given them, and proceeds to discover their ethical shortcomings.

Up to that moment obedience to the precepts of religion is the supreme rule of all ethical action and prayer cannot but conform to it. It thus comes about that the ethical consciousness sometimes feels no repugnance in carrying out commands which will later on appear detestable, and that prayer calls for the death of enemies or the success of treason or perfidy in order to compass their destruction. Evidently, in cases such as these, it is not shrinking from an immoral action but shinking from obedience that is regarded as sinful.

One need not go back to half savage tribes in order to find examples of this, nor refer to certain passages in the Old Tes-

[1] Cf. M. Puglisi, *Il Problema morale nelle religioni primitive*, Roma, 1915; R. Petrazzoni, *Dio Formazione e sviluppo del Monoteismo nella storia delle Religioni*, Rome, 1922.

tament, or recall some of the hymns of the ancient East, such as those in the Atharva-Veda, in order to find prayers for the annihilation of adversaries and enemies. Andrea Lefèvre tells us how he himself heard in the schools of Cairo prayer for the help of Allah, the compassionate and merciful Lord of all creatures, for the destruction of infidels and pagans and the enemies of religion.

> O Allah [says this prayer] make their sons orphans and pollute their homes; destroy them utterly; grant that their families, their houses, their relatives, their friends, their goods, their servants, their treasures and their lands may become the prey of the Mussulmans. O Lord, give ear to our prayers.

Now it is evident that such a prayer, inspired by a religious environment that is morally on a level with a primitive mentality, will arouse repugnance when the ethical vision abandons the religious sanction which took its rise at that stage of mentality and adopts another sanction which looks rather to an altruistic standard of ethical values, to which even religion itself is subjected. If in fact, when we read the above prayer, we pronounce it to be utterly immoral, we do not base our condemnation on the teaching of any religion. It issues from a source which no authority can gainsay except the authority of our own judgment acting as its own tribunal of justice. As in the field of religious knowledge the ultimate sanction rests upon the direct and immediate apprehension of truth, so in the field of morality it is the ethical consciousness alone which gives the right to approve or disapprove conduct and therefore supplies the standard by which it is possible to distinguish an ethical prayer from one that is not ethical.

History gives us, in every race and every age, plenty of examples of ethical prayer. Religious worship, it is true, often tries to enter into bargains with the hidden powers; but even then, by the mere fact that it assumes a reign of justice, thanks to which the worshiper may with confidence look for the ful-

fillment of his dearest hopes, it has already recognized an ethical order which controls the world and human life.

The Indian conception of *rita* or *dharma* corresponds to this reign of justice. *Asha* is the Persian equivalent of the idea of truth or right. In the heaven of the Greeks Δίκη and τὸ θεῖον reign as justice and the divine. Any form of worship in which such an ethical order is not taken for granted is not a religious but a magic cult.

As religious systems gain a clearer consciousness of the iron logic which inevitably leads religion to put into effect everything which is taken for granted, and so to act as a controlling and educative force in human conduct, ethical prayer comes to assume an increasingly definite position side by side with eudaemonistic, aesthetic and noetic prayer.

History, too, as we have already seen in the case of the other types of prayer, points to acts of preparation and of appeals to the gods—with the difference that, while in the case of eudaemonistic prayer, power stands out as the most conspicuous and important quality in the sacred object, while beauty does so in the case of aesthetic prayer and wisdom in noetic prayer, the outstanding element in ethical prayer is goodness and supreme justice. Here too we find expressions of the joy of possession, words of praise and thanksgiving for triumph over temptation, for moral regeneration, for blessings received.

But, to confine ourselves to its principal manifestations, we can distinguish three—firstly, sacrifice of the individual for the community; secondly, complete submission to or union with the Divine Will; lastly, heroic action for the victory of the good over evil. The first two form a parallel to the ultimate tendency of both aesthetic and noetic prayer to end in the mystic death; the last tends to become a means of moral elevation for the individual and the community. We shall see later how this last type may, in the case of a religious genius, come to embrace within it the other kinds of prayer and to assign to them a special and most important function in life.

In history one first becames conscious of the ethical function

of prayer when, in order to avoid the serious danger encountered on the road of self-perfection or on that of solitary surrender to the divine spirit, the suggestion is made, as in the religious literature of the Pali, that it is useless to try to attain true happiness unless one has pity for the suffering. It is a significant fact that the ethical element here invoked is not derived from the doctrine of self-perfection, which is the prevailing theme in the Pali literature. This only serves to bring out all the more clearly the manifest lack of the ethical element, which has to be introduced from other sources. For since both Japanese Buddhism in the East and the Jewish religion and Christianity in the West have placed the ethical-social element well in the forefront, it may be clearly seen to form the necessary complement of the religious activity, which cannot find its full scope or satisfaction in liberation, in salvation or in personal happiness.

An examination of the idea of God in the *Old Testament* and the *Talmud* shows that the fundamental character of the God of Israel is not that which Marcion tries to maintain, but rather that of a Heavenly Father who cares for his children with infinite love and to whom prayer must be something much richer than a mere instrument of personal salvation. That prayer, which in St. Stephen, St. Polycarp and St. Cyprian corresponds to a spontaneous and irresistible movement toward personal salvation, gradually expands and is enriched with ethical elements, until it embraces within its scope the brethren who are dead as well as those who are living and leads to the most heroic actions.

The idea of individual redemption, which offers a very fertile theme to ethical prayer, is rapidly transformed into the idea of the redemption of the community and, in universalistic religions, the idea of the redemption of humanity. The growth of this idea of redemption, however, is not due, as might appear at first sight, to the fact that men live together in a single community or from each individual being impelled by the same desire for liberation or by each feeling himself bound by a common destiny nor yet by the consciousness that they all belong to one mystic body, but is due primarily to their being

conscious of a universal ethical principle, of a sense of justice not limited by the contingencies of historical phenomena.

If it is true (as indeed can hardly be doubted) that language and religion are the strongest spiritual links that bind the individual to the community, it is likewise certain that, when prayer is manifested as one great pulsation of the mighty invisible soul of the community, it fulfills a new and most important social function. Prayer is then not merely the voice of the individual crying in the wilderness but the great collective voice praying that all may receive those very blessings which the individual (thinking of himself mistakenly as separated from the great mother, the community) had vainly believed he could ask solely for himself—vainly, because no one can live his life alone.

The primitive mentality, in reaction against the pervasive influence of the community, looks out upon the world as a realm to master or to avoid. Under such a reactionary tendency, the community seems to be a group of interests on the aggressive or the defensive. Only when the individual attains to a clearer ethical vision—rather than merely a legalistic or eudaemonistic vision—of his inseparability from the community, will he acquire a truer and more lovely sense of his own individuality. For only then will he be able to feel the griefs and joys of others as his own, only then will he be able to enrich his inner life by quitting the narrow range of individuality and gathering in one embrace the community and even all humanity. And humanity, in its turn, will only then be able, like a great mother, to let the whole richness of its life flow freely into the veins of the individual life.

But when the individual has a lively sense of his inseparability from the world and the community his aspirations are no longer restricted to his own liberation (that would be a purely negative phase of eudaemonistic prayer), nor does he confine himself to his individual redemption (that represents a positive phase of ethical religion); but in his unending and anxious struggle, in his fervent desire to overcome the limitations set to his power and knowledge, in his yearning for salvation and for light, he

finds in the community and in humanity a motive that he had never known before for religious emotion and ethical prayer.

Many prayers have been written in modern times which are inspired by a lively sense of human brotherhood. I need only cite that of Giuseppe Mazzini, which was written in London in 1846 and is little known.

> God of pity, God of peace and love [it says] forgive, oh forgive the slaveholders: great is their guilt, but infinite is Thy pity . . . they sin against Thee and against humanity. They have bent the knee before an idol; they have, under the blind impulse of the senses, denied the intellectual and moral life; they have lost sight of the man in the slave. . . . But Thou, as a symbol of Thy providence, hast set a single sun in the sky for the whole world. Thou has interwoven in the harmony of a vast symphony—beside which our music is but a whisper and a dim echo—the whole range of worlds, the finite rays of Thy infinite thought. But in everything in this beautiful visible universe . . . Thou didst wish that, as they looked, they should see the mark of unity blazoned forth. . . . Thou didst arrange that in history there should be progressive manifestations of Thy life. The first was in space and time. A second source of truth and unity is the fabric of Thy law. As a third witness to Thy law Thou hast set in the heart of every man a voice which cries out to him saying, "Thou art free because thou must account for thine own actions—free because thou art a man, made in God's image, bearing concealed within thee the capacities, the aspirations, the destinies of humanity." And they have denied the universality of that cry, and, shut up within themselves, have said, "It exists in us alone." Listen not to their blasphemy, O Lord. . . . By Thy aid may their minds be enlightened and their hearts be touched! May the angel of holy aspiration come down to them at night in their dreams and repeat to them the cry of horror raised by all who believe in and love humanity! O God of pity, God of peace and love, forgive,

> oh forgive the slaveholders! Great is their guilt, but infinite is Thy pity! Open up in the desert of their souls the living fountain of charity. May the angel of penitence descend . . . and between them and his sentence may the prayer arise of those who suffer, as I suffer, for Thy holy cause, Thy sacred truth, for the emancipation of nations and the human soul!

But the most elementary forms of ethical prayer seek for the individual the power to carry out what he is taught; they seek the assistance of higher powers against the spirit of evil and against temptations; they seek for him strength to subdue bad inclinations and selfishness and thereafter to have patience, devotion, love, sacrifice for his own brethren. While eudaemonistic, aesthetic and noetic prayer pay regard almost exclusively to the good of the individual, ethical prayer, though in its first phase it seeks for the individual the attainment of moral values (without which his social action could have no ethical meaning), yet does not completely fulfill its function unless those values are attained for the purposes of the collective life, and (be it noted) with the sacrifice, if need be, of the individual who has asked to receive them.

We find, it is true, eudaemonistic prayers which seek the material good of the community, and aesthetic and noetic prayers which seek for all the ineffable joy of the divine rapture and the divine light. In so far as they thus manifest themselves, they become for the time being ethical prayers. They never, however, attain to the position taken by ethical prayer, of seeking the sacrifice of the individual in the supreme joy of universal redemption. This sacrifice of the individual for the community, which we have described as one of the three manifestations of ethical prayer, corresponds to that adoration of the Divine under the form of beauty and wisdom which culminates in the mystic death, since the adoration of the Divine under the form of the supreme Justice also finds its crowning point in the elimination of the human agent, leaving alive only the remembrance of his heroic action.

This desire to sacrifice self for humanity is a marked feature in some of the prayers of the Bahaists and Brahmo-Somaj of our own day. "O my God," says one such prayer, "my blood is ready to be shed on the path to Thee, my heart is eager to be consumed in the fire of Thy love, my body desires to ascend the cross and be sacrificed for Thy servants."

Similar prayers are found in the first centuries of the Christian era, in which we have not the mere emotional creation of a religious symbol or of acts of ritual but, in addition, an inner, compelling irresistible religious emotion for the salvation of a group.

In that constant tidal movement in which prayer oscillates between the rigidity of liturgical forms and the free atmosphere of creative activity, the history of the Christian religion shows the development of ethical prayer at its highest as it passes from the salvation of a group to the salvation of all mankind—following the example of the heroic sacrifice of Jesus, who offered up his life for the redemption of humanity and prayed for his enemies. Having become the purest expression of religious and at the same time of heroic emotions, of souls which, concentrating on eternal values, have renounced everything that is mortal, this type of prayer comes to consider the very existence of the individual as solely and exclusively a sacrifice to be offered to God. Its secret consists in appealing to all that is divinest and most transcendent in human actions, and the nearer it approaches to it the more noble and lofty do its ideals become and the more prepared becomes the human heart for the joy of sacrifice.

For the same reason it has been considered necessary for the perfection of gods and Buddhas that they should descend from their state of blessedness to reincarnation and sacrifice. For only a heroic action for humanity can give them that perfection which comes from the martyr's crown.

But besides one manifestation of ethical prayer which culminates in the sacrifice of the individual for humanity, we have already noted a second which leads up to a kind of mystical death—a death realized, however, not as in the preceding case by

the sacrifice of self or the individual on behalf of humanity, but by the identification of the will of the individual with that of God or of Ethical Law.

The conception of God under the form of supreme goodness, the conception of law under the form of absolute justice, could not but bring the human will face to face with these ideal standards. As soon as it is realized that these standards are an expression of an ethical and not a mechanical principle, and a manifestation of belief in and devotion to that principle, this manifestation at once acquires an ethical value. "I confide everything I have to Thee," says a Bahaist prayer, "because Thou art my guide and my refuge." When this ideal realm is conceived as a realm of supreme justice, the most enlightened thing that man can do is to seek the identification of his human will with this ideal realm.

I am well aware that such a course of action may be derived from a legalistic view of the religious life as well as from the consciousness of the union of the human with the divine in the sphere of the absolute. But in any case the surrender and the trust in a realm of justice certainly always rests on an ethical basis.

We can find prayers full of this surrender and trust even among primitive peoples. "Let me keep near Thee, O God, and do Thou keep near me—Who is my father? Thou alone, O God, Thou seest me and protectest me where'er I go. We are all in Thy hands. May Thy will be done—I will what Thou willest." "We know not what is good," pray the Khonds of Orissa, "and what should be the object of our prayers. But Thou, who knowest, grant it to us."

The trust that some primitive men have in their supreme beings leads them to think that these beings have no need of prayers to induce them to satisfy the desires of men. This is the case, for example, with Dendid, a supreme being of Central Africa. The Australian natives would think it folly to address daily prayers to Baiame, because the Father knows what his own children need. The Zulus of Africa think it sufficient to call

the spirits of their ancestors by name, seeing no need to tell them what they want since they already know.

When prayer is made for the identification of the struggling human will with the Divine Will, in full consciousness of the ethical value of the action, the legalist and mechanistic formulary has already become transformed. The Egyptian hymns to the majesty and loving-kindness of the gods, those of the Babylonian poets addressed to symbols of the universal order of nature, the Vedic singer who invokes Varuna or the Peruvian who prays to Pachacamac, all imply just as ethical a view of the powers that be as do the prophets of any other age or religion. Prayer for the union of a man's will with the Divine Will, provided that it is envisaged as in accord with supreme justice, reaches those heights which we have already recognized as the goal of the heroic manifestation of ethical prayer.

As I have said, however, this prayer for the identification of the human will with the Divine Will and with eternal law tends toward a form of mystic death. This occurs, for example, in the prayer of the Spaniard, Gregorio Lopez, who prayed continuously for three years: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"; or even in the prayer of Madame de Chantal, who, in a state of self-abandonment, says, "Do with me as it pleaseth Thee, O God; destroy me—I am content; break me in pieces—I am willing; tear me, rend me, burn me as it pleaseth Thee—I belong to Thee entirely." The same effacing of her own will may be observed in the prayer of Madame Guyon, "O my God, destroy my will," she says, "and grant that nothing may be more welcome to me than my annihilation."

This kind of ethical prayer must, as St. Francis de Sales remarks, be confined to an attitude that excludes fear and hope; for these both imply tendencies which a man must suppress, just as he would a desire for spiritual or physical gifts. The Spanish Quietist, Molinos, expressed this tendency to mystic death very well when he said that if a man resigns his own will to the Divine Will he ought not to pray to God at all, since praying is itself an act of the will, which tries to bend the will

of God to its own desires; whereas it is really we who ought to bend and efface our wills before the will of God. And as we ought not to express any desire in our prayers, so we ought not even to give thanks, since even this, according to Molinos, is an act of will.

Angelus Silesius has expressed the same thought in a distich:

> Wie selig ist der Mensch, der weder will noch weiss,
> der Gott (versteht mich recht) nicht giebet Lob und Preis.

The mysticism of the Quietists sets itself to display this "passive prayer" under the most attractive forms and does not hesitate to regard it as "the most excellent way." No doubt, as I have already remarked, passivity is one of the aspects of ethical prayer; but it cannot be denied that here it has reached a state like the Nirvana of Buddhism, that "*sainte indifférence*" which finds its analogy in the *upekkâ* of the mendicant Buddhist monk, in which prayer limits its operations at the most to "*l'exercise de la présence de Dieu.*" [2] When, therefore, Fénelon prays: "I have no other desire, O my God, but Thy will," and adds: "Teach me to pray, and pray Thou for me," he has placed himself outside the range of ethical prayer.

But, I would repeat, this desire for the identification of the human will with that of God as with Ultimate Law, ending in the negation of the individual will and in mystic death, is really an aspect, though I admit a very extreme one, of ethical prayer.

Another aspect, however, based upon the example of Jesus, does not efface but keeps alive the human will, limiting itself to bringing that will into harmony with the will of a living God. When Dante says, "*In la tua volontate è la nostra pace,*" he exactly expresses what this harmony means, viz. the active and fruitful coöperation of man with the laws which govern the universe. When Socrates prays the gods to grant him internal

[2] Cf. H. Heppe, *Geschichte der quietistischen Mystik in der Katholischen Kirche*, Berlin, 1875.

beauty or when Tagore asks in one of his prayers that he may surrender his own powers to the will of God in love, they too stand within the range of the ethical.

> Lo, this is the prayer that I can raise to Thee, O Lord [says the Indian poet], strike, strike at its roots, the wickedness of my heart. Give me strength to bear with calmness my griefs and my joys. Give me strength to make my love fruitful in serving Thee. Give me strength never to refuse a poor man, never to bend the knee before insolent power. Give me strength to lift my spirit above daily suffering. Give me strength to submit my strength to Thy will in love.

> Satisfy this insatiable hunger for life [prays one of our contemporary poets];[3] quench this raging thirst for self-surrender and self-extinction; appease this desperate longing for eternity. Take me, fold me in Thy arms, breathe upon my face the breath of Thy holiness, fling me into the torrent of that pure harmonious love which links all things together, that it may engulf and carry me to that sea of wonders which has no shores. . . . My prayer is to think of Thee with suppressed ardor and long persistent passion, to think of Thee to the verge of faintness, of exhaustion, of annihilation. My prayer is to love Thee till my whole being is consumed, is lost in Thee. My prayer is to live in a furnace of longing for Thee, without hope, burning in a slow fire like wood turning into charcoal . . . without asking anything in return save a gleam of Thy kindly smile. My prayer is to sing to Thee with the voice of a soul cleansed from the stains of common life, with the words of a soul restored to the sacred simplicity of childhood and clothed in rough honest peasant cloth, to sing to Thee that I may delight Thee and find the gateway to Thy good pleasure. Oh, smile upon me, my God, and I will kiss the ground. And, when I lift myself up, my heart will be enlarged and ready for flight.

[3] Cf. A. S. Novara, *Dio è qui*, Milan, 1927.

It is clear that we have here an activist element, not visible in quietism or even in the prayer of a great mediaeval mystic like Tauler, for whom prayer meant simply giving one's whole heart to God; because here the renunciation of one's own will implies a strong consciousness of that harmony which, on the plane of ethical action for humanity, is attained between the human and the Divine Will. It is therefore not a passive renunciation, not a passive quietistic abandonment but an active heroic collaboration.

It is indeed in this field that is found that third manifestation of ethical prayer which tends to become, as I have observed, an instrument of moral elevation for the individual and the community.

Examples of this type of prayer may be traced in the religious communities of India and Babylonia, Egypt and Peru, in those of the Greeks and the followers of Confucius, Lao-tze and Moses, and wherever the consciousness of human collaboration with the divine order of the world has been revealed to man as he prays. Among the personalities which have appreciated it best may be mentioned Malvida von Meysenbug, Leibnitz, Rousseau, Goethe, Emerson, Ruskin, de Lagarde, Amiel, Mazzini, Beethoven, Everett Hill, Parker, Slicer, Vigil and Tagore. With regard to the two earlier manifestations of ethical prayer which we have recently described, we find that the first has tended utterly to absorb and efface man's activity and therefore his will in a pessimistic negation of the world and of life, and therefore by implication the negation of the ethical relations which bind us together, while the second has confined itself to harmonizing the human will in its personal aspects with the Divine Will. But at this point the third manifestation differentiates itself as the heroic sacrifice of oneself for saving and redeeming humanity, not a mere renunciation but a heroic exaltation and a winning of life's ethical values.

No trace of this has been observed in eudaemonistic or in aesthetic or noetic prayer, nor yet in those manifestations of ethical prayer itself which call for the sacrifice or the effacement

of self, whether by way of heroic action on behalf of humanity or by the identification of the human will with the will of God or with Eternal Law.

This process served to conceal prayer's essential characteristic. Prayer is not a static condition, as are the manifestations which immediately precede or succeed it, such as pure reflection, concentration or adoration. It is movement, strong invisible movement, an upward thrust of the vital impulse, that ascent to the Heavenly Father which Jesus knew, that ascent to God (ἀνάβασις νοῦ προς τὸν θεὸν) of which St. John of Damascus spoke; it is what Origen calls "*elevatio mentis ad Deum*," what St. Thomas Aquinas means when he says "*oratio est ascensus mentis in Deum*" and St. Bonaventura when he says "*oratio nihil aliud est quam ascensus intellectus ad Deum*"; it is the ascent up the ladder of love pictured by Ruysbroeck, leading to that fullness of life toward which the religious genius, prophet and mystic alike, point the way by prayer.

Perhaps it will be said that in this manifestation some sacrifice of self is required through the identification of the human will with a higher order of things. But in this case the sacrifice and the identification are not ends in themselves, but rather a means of reaching the higher sphere of ethical values. Here prayer does not try, as Slicer says, to lower God to the level of man but rather to raise man to the level of God, not by asking for what man wants but by doing what God wishes and by coöperating with Him.

Prayer thus acquires a new character. When the soul approaches the Divine Life not with the view of effacing its own will or of emptying itself of all its content, but with the view of identifying itself with the Divine Will, it has already overcome the old dualistic position which culminated in an insoluble antithesis between the immutability of the laws of nature and the fluctuating needs of man.

To pray that the will of God and not of man should be done no longer means, as in the primitive type of prayer, to ask what man, apart from God, wants; it means to love, in union with

God, what God wills. Then, and then only, can it be said that man has by prayer come into perfect contact with the Divine. For it is only when the heart is filled with the sense of beauty, only when man does what is manifestly good and just, only when he affirms or denies what is justly conceived as true or false, that man's spirit can be said unmistakably to be identified with the Divine. When he has once attained by prayer to a clear vision of absolute values and has consciously felt in perfect contact with the Divine, he can never hereafter fall away from the Divine without feeling that he is to blame. Hence to pray that the Divine Will should be revealed to him really means to pray that truth, good and beauty should be revealed to him in their perfection or on the higher plane of Divine revelation. To love these qualities really means to love to lead a life in accordance with the principles which follow from them. Thus the hope of an answer to prayer is suffused with the joy of its fulfillment. The sense of insufficiency (which is erroneously supposed to be inherent in prayer) the yearning for the filling up, the completion of the spiritual life is suffused with the joy of its presence. The gradual liberation from the physical world, into which the spirit penetrates, in order that it may by successive stages test its own worth and enhance its own character, is suffused with the glow of translating into action its own spiritual exaltation.

If it is true that the fullness of God's nature is not bounded by His divine life but extends also into His human life, true communion with God cannot be obtained by flight from the world but by the daily exercise of goodness and charity in a life of active and fruitful service. In fact when the Christian Church once realized that it was its duty to take part in the doings of the community it ceased to aim at recruiting ascetics or monks, with their consecrated life of idleness, and mysticism in deserts; it ceased to call upon men to forsake their worldly occupations. If leading monastic orders, such as those of Bernard of Clairvaux or Francis of Assisi, exalt poverty and humility, it is certainly not with a view to renouncing an active mission of goodness and charity. For with them love of God means love of humanity,

life is lived as an example, sacrifice aims not at the salvation of self but of others.

It is not a passive optimism nor yet an inert or fatalistic pessimism that this vision of the world calls for but an energetic and active optimism. It believes profoundly in the supreme value and in the inalienable rights of human personality; it does not seek happiness in passive immobility or surrender of the will but believes in the fruitfulness of activity, in the virtue of a martyrdom which uplifts life. Instead of negation of the world, visionary aestheticism, literary dilettantism, emotional disturbance (which tends to make the pure stream of religion muddy rather than clear), it chooses the drama of life in which human flesh falls, bit by bit, upon the burning embers of pain; because it is by pain and by pain alone that the garland of victory acquires a matchless glory and life gains a religious quality which it could attain in no other way. Instead of a passive quietism which shrinks timidly from the arena of history in order to escape from the clutches of evil, it adopts a creative activity, both fertile and heroic, which, conscious of the difficult task allotted to human effort, steps forth to meet evil, in order to attain that ideal life which is purified and exalted in pain.

From this vision of life, which recognizes the voice of God in heroism, in the beauty of nature, in art and in science, which calls the wandering pilgrim to ever higher and higher forms of existence, emerges that ethical prayer which, realizing the inevitable necessities of physical life, the claims of aesthetic feeling and the incalculable benefits of wisdom, gathers together and includes in itself all other types of prayer, exalting and strengthening them.

> Love the sun [it says] which in its light gives you love; love the starry vault which rolls over you in peace while you sleep. . . . If anyone rises in anger against you, love him, and his anger will abate; love him still more, and he will love you in his turn. . . . For love is happiness and until you can learn this misery will grip you and keep you wretched.

Love nature and she will take upon herself your troubles; love men and they will take upon themselves your wants; love the earth and she will softly take to herself your body; love God and He will take to Himself your spirit.

One of the most beautiful prayers which the mind of contemporary religion has produced is a prayer not of inaction but of work. "O Townsmen," it says, "go and see those who write their prayers to the Lord with the great pen of the plow and see how the Lord bestows His gifts between the lines of that writing."

Let the day of man [says the poet] be bounded at either end by prayer. "Heaven's bell is sounding ever nearer," he will say in the morning to all living things, "and already the song of the cock is ringing out. Before and behind thee, above and beneath thee, stretches the infinite. Kindle the light of thy spirit. Kindle the fire of thy heart. Drive away solitude. Break through the silence and advance. Sow, as He bade thee, the word of Goodness and Love. Daylight will come, and that which thou hast sown will arise as a blessing upon the earth. Ask for nothing. Hope for nothing from men. The air of heaven will nourish thee. Cleanse thy ears that they may hear, thine eyes that they may see, thy hands that they may help those that suffer, thy tongue that it may repeat His teaching. Let all good words fall into the furrow of suffering! Let all words of faith fill the void of doubt."

And when the evening has come, the prayer of the thoughtful worker will be addressed to the dead who are still alive among us:

"To those who have ears and hear not, who have eyes and see not, who have a heart and love not, who have a soul and feel not the passion of justice. To those who mourn by the tombs of cemeteries and remember not the tombs of prisons; who shudder when the cypresses shake but pass by the hospital walls without feeling the pain that runs through them. To those who condemn without pity. To those who gorge

unashamed before the eyes of the hungry. To those who make profit out of a fault, a slip, a farthing. To those who laugh when they see a woman who has become a mother and has no husband or law or affection to protect her. To those who turn their backs upon one who is foul within and knows not how to get clean. To those who are consumed with envy, knowing not that we are all one and that the triumph of one is the triumph of all. To those who tread upon carpets without thinking of the feverish hands that wove them, who trample on the flower-bed without knowing that at every step they are destroying many a life, who trample on the people without feeling any pity for their martyrdom. To those who taste the fruit without feeling sympathy with the plant, who consume bread without feeling sympathy with the plowman or pity for the oxen. To those who clothe themselves with the silk which is the product of a worm and feel disgust for the frail creatures who creep along the ground. To those who love butterflies that they may see them die, and birds that they may shut them in cages, and flowers that they may tear them from their stalks. And to the other unhappy ones, the other dead ones who are among us—to the judge who does not suffer because of the innocent man who is in prison through his carelessness; to him who complacently commits every wickedness; to another who exultingly keeps the fruits of his trickery; to the wretched man who fills his purse with hate, when he cannot with gold; and to those other dead ones who have been killed by the world's coldness, to those without bread, without home, without love, without purpose, to those who do not exist because their hearts and their minds have been starved. . . . Well, let us love them all! And inasmuch as life was given to them by the love of two, may the love of many complete the miracle of their resurrection! Let us raise to heaven a prayer for all these dead."[4]

[4] I take these extracts from the book *El Erial* by Constant C. Vigil, trans. by F. Testena, Nervi, 1924.

Such is the eager fruitful prayer of work which seems so well adapted to the religious consciousness of the day. Never perhaps in the whole history of prayer have we been able to gather so many flowers for its garland as to-day.

> Where the mind is without fear [sings Tagore] and the head is held high; where knowledge is free; where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls; where words come out from the depths of truth; where tireless striving stretches its arms toward perfection; where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit; where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.[5]

> Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers [says the same poet elsewhere] but to be fearless in facing them. Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain but for the heart to conquer it. Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield but to my own strength. Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved but hope for the patience to win my freedom. Grant me that I may not be a coward, feeling your mercy in my success alone; but let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure.[6]

Prayer such as this no longer sees in the world the terrible mythical kingdom of evil spirits, who threaten life at every step, but the invaluable and fertile field for the training of character and the perfecting of the spirit. The world is no doubt harsh and its corners are sharp; but if smoothing them means destroying the instrument which refines our souls, quenching the fire which purifies them, then blessed be pain! We see more clearly every day that it is not by avoiding evil but by conquering it, not by withdrawing from the world but by struggling in it for the triumph of good, that the will is trained, the character is formed and that the energy is generated which is able

[5] Cf. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, 35.
[6] Id., *Fruit-gathering*, LXXIX.

to transform human life into divine life. And we see, moreover, that prayer itself is never so sweet and so fruitful as when bathed in tears; since it is only by contrast with the darkness that the stars shine their brightest and it is only by wiping away the sorrow of human beings that the holiest joy is brought to flower.

CHAPTER XIII

The Evaluation of Prayer

Having now traced the various developments of prayer in broad outline, beginning with the vital impulse and passing through the different manifestations which correspond to the nature of the spirit and its fundamental activities, we are enabled to obtain a deeper insight into the special function which prayer fulfills in life. Its upward growth starts from an elemental feeling of insecurity, the sense of a daily menace to life, a distressing consciousness of the limits placed on the assertion and development of the material life as well as on that of the spirit. And as this consciousness becomes more clearly marked the longing for liberation, for salvation, for redemption from evil, far from growing weaker, becomes more powerful and even insupportable. But the clearer ethical insight becomes, the wider the range of human vision expands. Bounded at first by aspirations for material salvation, it passes on little by little, with ever increasing freedom, to an ethical redemption which is no longer individual but universal, to an admiration for and practical realization of the ethical values of life.

All through the course of this development we observe certain deviations in different directions, which tend to fix man's mind on an accidental or secondary aspect of prayer, on the stereotyping of the religious feeling or even on the avowed stultification of the religious act itself—whether by ascribing its merit to an external power or by an extreme and pantheistic denial of self. In following the lines of this development, which correspond not to a rectilinear movement but to an attitude, an expansion of life, and which spreads out in various directions according to its

inner needs and historical circumstances—this development which corresponds not to a merely mechanical process but to a teleological function, and which has its *raison d'être* in the essential needs of the human spirit that stretch beyond any visible goal, we find throughout a range of values, along which prayer passes both in the religious consciousness and in history.

Briefly it may be said that there are two points which determine the development of prayer. One point is conditioned by the necessities out of which prayer takes its rise, the other by the end at which it aims. The one is conditioned by considerations incidental to the preservation of material life and the acquisition of increased power and control over the external world; the other by spiritual considerations which hold out an ideal goal for attainment.

No other activity can compete with prayer as a help toward the realization of the aim here indicated. Sacrifice cannot, for it is nothing but self-surrender; mysteries cannot, for they are simply acts of purification; whereas prayer, which is essentially an act of exaltation, is also an ideal synthesis of every other form of cult.

Prayer therefore must contain within itself, more clearly and more markedly than these other activities, characteristics which will enable us to determine its various degrees of value. And if we give close observation to the part which it plays in the life of the spirit, to its aim and to its means of attaining that aim, we shall have a standard of value which we should seek for in vain in its local or temporal environment. By looking at the spiritual emotions which produce and sustain it and the aim which man when he prays sets before himself, we have been able to determine a classification of prayer, independently of any ulterior and unreliable historical or doctrinal embodiments. By observing the resemblances and differences between different manifestations of prayer, we have been able to determine which are shown to be inspired by the same and which by different motives. This method has led us to find in prayer deeper and more significant characteristics than those which were offered to us by previous

classifications, which reduced it to acts of thanksgiving, praise, petition and so forth, without telling us what it was that caused the thanksgiving or what was the signification of the petition. Where, however, prayer is located in its eudaemonistic, aesthetic and ethical embodiments, we are able to pick out, on a much greater scale (unknown to previous classifications) the most specific and significant characteristics of prayer; and we can thus, through the wider range opened up to us by tracing it back to the fundamental activities of the spirit, attain to a greater depth of insight.

This classification, therefore, should form our starting point when we set out to ascertain the specific value which attaches to the different embodiments of prayer. The identity of the activity which gives rise to any particular types makes them, so to speak, spiritually contemporary. Thus, as I have pointed out, prayers which are separated by long intervals of time and which arose at different stages of civilization often seem to us, in virtue of the spirit which animates them, to be contemporary; while others, which arose at the same time, may in some cases be regarded as originated for a time which has not yet begun to dawn and in other cases seem like fragmentary remains of a civilization which is dead and buried.

But even if we recognize that prayers can be thus spiritually contemporary and can represent anticipations of the future or survivals of the past, quite apart from their environment in space and time, we are entitled to form an estimate of their values only in relation to the similarity or difference of the motives which give rise to them. As long as we remain in this field of relativity, our estimate must be dependent upon the standpoint at which we place ourselves, which allow us to observe likenesses and differences, but nothing more; for as soon as this standpoint is shifted it clearly must carry along with it all previous valuations. The limitations thus imposed by the changing and shifting of the point of view permit only a plain statement of relative values. As regards prayer these limitations only permit

us to state whether one prayer is equal in value to another or is of less or greater value and so forth.

In order to get rid of this vicious circle and free ourselves from these limitations we must evidently have a standpoint which is not relative to another but is valid in itself. As long as we confine ourselves to comparisons, to asking what is the value of one thing in reference to another, we only appear to be moving forward; in reality we are remaining stationary. Such a conception of values could only satisfy one who thinks that he is living in a world of convention and illusion—in other words one who deceives himself; because in such a world of illusions the valuation which he makes must be an illusion too.

If on the other hand we admit that every activity of the spirit which produces and sustains prayer has a special value of its own, and that therefore the various forms which the vital impulse takes must be valued in reference to the purpose and the function which they fulfill, then we have at length found a firm foothold.

I will endeavor to explain my ideas briefly. The imaginative or aesthetic activity has a different value from the critical or noetic; and this in its turn has a different value from the emotional or ethical. If, however, we compare them with the function of the vital impulse which tends to the preservation of life and the increase of material power, we at once see that they possess in themselves a value unknown to the activity of self-preservation. While this last function is not an end in itself but only a means to an end, the aesthetic, noetic and ethical functions contain their own ends in themselves. They are not present as the raw material to be used by the spirit for attaining ends unknown to that material, but rather they are complete acts of the spirit itself —complete because self-contained.

To frame an evaluation of prayer, therefore, we must take this proposition as our starting point. The value of every psychical activity depends upon its object, and accordingly prayer which aims at control over the outer world and riddance from physical evil stands lower in the scale than prayer which is a

means of attaining a state of ecstasy in contemplation of the divine beauty or the blessedness of intellectual vision or of the moral life.

We can readily recognize that as prayer rids itself from the mean egotistical trappings in which in a certain stage of primitive mentality it is only too closely bound, as it comes to be fed by that spiritual life which is better suited to the spiritual nature of its activity, it acquires a value which it otherwise lacks. We can also recognize that as it divests itself from the manifestations of magic and that formalism which threatens at times to sap its life, as it succeeds in harmonizing its conservative phase more completely with its creative phase and in throwing off and rejecting all that is dross, all that is not religious, it becomes purer and acquires a higher value.

It is less easy to recognize that noetic prayer has a higher value than aesthetic prayer or that ethical prayer has a higher value than either. We have to remember that the final aim of human life appears to consist in the creation not of works of beauty or of knowledge but of goodness. We have to consider that there would be little value in a world capable of creating works of beauty or of knowledge if it were blind to the ethical ideal because it is only in the effort to attain its partial realization that either the aesthetic or noetic world can find its justification. If we so remember and so consider then we must admit that the prayer which aims at giving release from physical evil has less value than that which acts as an aesthetic instrument for curing and healing the sorrows of our earthly lot; that of greater value than this is the prayer which acts as an instrument of knowledge, of release from evil, from ignorance and error, in other words from intellectual evil and its disastrous consequences; and that lastly, of greater value still is that prayer which becomes an instrument of spiritual purification, of moral redemption—the only one of all the types of prayer which takes on the divine heroic note and which thus brings man to the level of all that is noblest and most sacred in his conception of the Divine in human form.

But that is not enough. The highest and most precious of the manifestations of the religious consciousness is found to be that in which the ethical sense is strongest and deepest. In like manner the highest and most precious form of prayer is that which, while it harmonizes the needs of the passing material world with the activities of contemplation and of knowledge and with the deep inner sense of morality, while it is free from all eudaemonistic motives that can distract it, yet displays what it really is in its own nature—a vital impulse, which by its inherent force bursts its way through the manifold channels of the psychic activities and presses on to break down the barriers which try to keep it from rising upward and from melting the human in the Divine.

From the point of view we have now gained, we can state that prayer takes its shape, through successive degrees of value, from a vital impulse, which starting from an attempt to control the physical world gradually passes on to aims of a higher order. From an isolated cry of wonder or exaltation, from the expérience of the numinous, from petitions for help, appeal or pardon, from hymns of praise and personal thanksgiving, it passes on to action which is preëminently social. Driven on by the scorching fires of physical evil it rises, with the gradual ordering of knowledge and experience, to the removal of intellectual and moral evil. It passes from a cry of fear and pain—a cry for personal liberation, salvation or redemption—to an impassioned appeal for goodness, accomplishing in its fruitful work for the salvation of the brethren one of the most heroic tasks that humanity can achieve.

During the course of this development, which corresponds not so much to a historic reality as to a scale of values based on its function in life, prayer increases both in delicacy and strength. It proves a potent educational instrument for the training of the will and for fighting vice and passion—a means of obtaining a state of happiness for the individual and a reign of justice and peace for all. It becomes, lastly, a source of comfort bestowed at every hour of life to revive hope in the desolate

heart, to give the soul of man the ineffable joy of that close and deep experience of the Divine which prayer alone enables him to realize and express.

As the course followed by prayer in the life of man is thus marked off into stages it follows that there is no single type of prayer that can attain to that perfect expression, not unknown to the great religious genius, in which the beatific vision of the sublime, the plenitude of abounding knowledge, the living sense of supreme love lived in a life of heroism are mingled together in the indivisible beauty of the spirit.

Historians and philosophers may ask the eternal question—what was the origin of prayer? Did it rise in the lofty majesty of tradition or in the silent humility of the heart? Does it come from a grace which, rapt in inscrutable mystery, descends from the realms of the absolute to find its way into the world of relativity? Or does it emerge from that world, as a simple product of man's life, to soar upwards to that light and perfection which mysteriously attract it? Whatever may be the answer, prayer exists, like any other reality, in the unending stream of history. Quitting its early association with sacrifice and mystery, and parting from that magic in which it first made its appearance, it has itself become both mystery and sacrifice in one, an act of humility, nobility and power. It is not explained by knowing the chain of causes which precede it, nor is it explained by the laws of human nature. It is not drawn from non-religious fields—such as metaphysics or ethics—but without departing from the realm of religion, without denying the true religious life of tradition, it takes on an entirely personal character and gives a special coloring to history. For the past, when relived by a deeply religious soul, always casts a new light upon the future.

The soul which, beneath the pale dead foliage, discerns the fresh undying sap that rises up unceasingly from a renewed and religious faith; the soul that longs to approach those exalted regions of life that rise up before it in the glow of a divine radiance; the soul that has come to see that religion consists not

in a constant withdrawal into itself but in a continual reshaping, by a constant process of replacement, of that which was by that which is to be; the soul that lives in the Divine not as in a bodily substance but in a mode of being; in which will love of good and of action are the supreme elements—that is the soul which best knows how to pray. Then is displayed the wonderful spectacle of a religious passion in its moral purity, in its close communion with the Divine, in the transforming power of Love.

On these lofty peaks of the religious life prayer takes its place as something more than the free spontaneous expression of the experience of the Divine. Rising above all philosophic teachings and all intellectual calculations it translates into action that experience which, in the biographies of the great ones of religion, is called a continual state of prayer. Such prayer is called *oratio infusa* by St. Theresa and Luther, because the soul, in its ineffable rapture, rising to God as He draws near to meet it, no longer seeks to distinguish, by reference to any earthly category, whether it is grace that bestows it or the heart that prompts it. In the indivisible unity of the divine act the very beating of the heart seems an act of grace, and behind it is God, who, as Pascal says, would not be sought if He were not already found. At this culminating point prayer has reached its climax, its highest and most significant work for the religious consciousness, its purest revelation of man's religious life, its greatest value in that teleological order of the world in which it finds its proper place and meaning.

Part IV

PRAYER IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER XIV

Prayer in the Religious Life of To-day

At the beginning of this book I pointed out that one of the signs of the times is the demand for a more concrete expression and more definite characterization of religious thought and life —in other words for a clearer conception of the part that religion should play in life both as an organized institution and in the individual conscience.

No doubt it is true that the churches, and especially the Roman Catholic Church, have never lost an opportunity of asserting their claims on political, economic, social and cultural life. The Congregation of the Holy Office, the Fathers of the High Court of Inquisition, later on the Encyclical *Quanta Cura*, the *Syllabus complectens praecipuos nostrae aetatis errores,* the Decree *Lamentabili sane exitu*, the Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, the *Motu Proprio* of 1907 and the new *Codex Juris Canonici* all serve to show how the Catholic Church constantly drives home its unchanging attitude toward the state and modern culture. The orthodox Eastern churches, whether obliged to struggle against the political and economic systems under which they are brought, as in Russia since the Bolshevik revolution, or favored by the rise of new states after the War, have shown a vitality of which until a few years ago they would not have seemed capable. Moreover among Evangelical organizations, both in Europe and America, there has been a marked movement toward union—a movement which at first sight might seem like a surrender or compromise and therefore an act of weakness, but which in reality evinces an energetic effort on their part to consolidate and define their position with regard to the civil power

and to economic and social life as well as to modern culture. It is particularly on this last point that the response has in some cases, as in the orthodox position of the so-called High Church, been constantly in the negative; but that has not prevented it from revising its own declarations of faith and so making clear its position either for or against the movements and claims of the lay world and lay culture.

The churches, whose power and authority are due to the consciousness of the function of religion in life, are to-day clearly supported in their endeavors to extend their influence by those governments in which, under the new political conditions, the old experiment is being revived of making religion an instrument of the power of the State, and thus converting religion, which is essentially supernational, into a national religion.

The post-war period, accordingly, has more than once seen churches assume a decidedly nationalistic tinge, e.g. the Catholic Church in Poland. And even where such a step was not possible because of the contradictions that it would have involved, as for instance in Russia, which made a complete *volte-face* from a Tsarist to a Bolshevik state, a distinctly new church has arisen—so essential does it seem to be to the political mind of today, quite as much as in the days of Machiavelli, for the government of the state to have the support of religion.

It is clear that a reawakened nationalism which is closely associated with special religious and cultural traditions cannot very easily escape the alluring vision of a National Church. This is particularly true when religion is considered under its historic aspect and therefore under changing conditions. The present revival of Hussism in Czechoslovakia and of Calvinism in Hungary correspond to a whole-hearted return to certain incidents in the national life, which have been wrapped in a halo of poetic romance and have gained strength from the sacred character given to them by religious tradition. The rise of new states has been accompanied by a process of internal cleavage and rationalistic particularism within the fabric of Christianity. Men have tried to repeat again what took place originally at the time

of the Oriental schism, when the Slav mind was so successful in adapting itself to Christianity that it actually transformed it into a real national religion. Then followed Hussism, which, after being crushed for many years by the Hapsburgs, rose again after their fall. Later on followed Lutheranism, which succeeded to a large extent in becoming the national religion of the German peoples. At the same time, in the very heart of the universal Catholic religion, there arose the Gallic movement, which was typical as showing the need of autonomy, while the Anglo-Saxon and Scotch mentalities turned naturally to Anglicanism, Puritanism, Presbyterianism or Calvinism.

It is this nationalistic sentiment, this conflict between duty to the nation and the supernational and world-wide claims of religion, that has produced the constructive features of modern national churches. It was evident that a certain number of states, having regained their independence by an appeal to nationalist principles, would naturally attach themselves to their own religious history and would seek for their governments the support of those religious factors which have exercised so powerful an influence as constructive forces in the national life.

On their side the churches could not but view with favor the new situation which called them to take a share in the spiritual activities of the nations and which added enormously to their power, partly by eliminating the risk of friction with those lay forces which had gradually come to consider them the natural allies of obscurantism and of capitalism, partly by the definite increase of authority which they received. All the national religious movements of the day, from the Hussite movement in Czechoslovakia to the Ghandist movement in India, have had the same program—to graft national and racial aims on the world conceptions of religion.

Even the opposition which is being witnessed to-day in the German republic between Lutheranism and the Reformed Church or between Lutheranism and Calvinism, which has become more marked since the separation between Church and State, is inspired not only by religious but also by nationalist

sentiment; since there is a tendency to condemn the original introduction of Calvinism into the earlier Lutheran system as the introduction of a religious system that was of Latin origin and therefore alien to the genius of the race.[1]

Side by side with these tendencies which lead, wherever circumstances allow, to the formation of regular national churches, other more or less extreme tendencies are found which require more or less radical innovations, since the new birth and the new life which they bring can only be found outside the traditions of the time.

In some cases the tendencies stop half-way, and we then have the modernist movements which cause such anxiety not only to the Roman Catholic Church but also to the orthodox Eastern and Anglican churches and to practically all the orthodox churches of Europe and America.[2] We have here an instance of one of those constantly recurring attempts at reform which are started by smallish groups of people who want to introduce a system of dogmas more in accordance with the scientific, philosophic and historical thought of the new age. But, not being sufficiently strong in their creative impulse, the modernists have for the most part continued to be bound by ecclesiastical tradition. They labor under the illusion that they can introduce reform from within. The Church, on the other hand, shows a more conservative spirit than ever, the masses are indifferent to religious difficulties, while the radicals boldly take up a more pronounced position with regard to the traditions of ancient or modern times. Amid these divergent forces the modernists have made but little headway.

Roman Catholic modernism, however, has recently drawn up a more extensive program and one more likely to arrest the attention even of those who do not live within the bosom of the Church. Going right back to those fundamental experiences

[1] Cf. Otto Kunze, *Der politische Protestantismus,* Munich, 1926; Bernard Dorries, *Der ferne und der nahe Gott,* Gotha, 1927.

[2] Cf. E. Buonaiuti, *Le Modernisme catholique,* translated by R. Monnot, Paris, 1927; Maude D. Peter, *Tyrrel, von Hügel e il Modernismo cattolico,* in "Ricerche Religiose," Rome, 1927.

which the life of religion has always offered to the human spirit and setting aside all elaborations of dogma and ritual, it aims at nothing less than the rebirth of Christianity. If indeed the soul of the crisis of modernism in the history of religion is to be found in an unreasoning basic impulse to

> bring religious experience, which has been wounded and poisoned by theological infiltrations, and has been cramped and stifled by legalistic Pharisaism, back to a frank realization of the evil with which cosmic existence is infected, to the recognition of the inherent need for spiritual regeneration, to a confession of the incomparable greatness of the law of love,[3]

then we have good grounds for recognizing that modernism should lead up to a wider and more practical program.

Such a search after truth, tending as it does to give a greater definiteness and concreteness to its own ideas and its own method of work, must produce effects which it is difficult to estimate. It is sufficient to emphasize the keen sense of increased definiteness and concreteness which has led modernism to break away from the limits of ecclesiasticism and to retrace its steps along that same path on which pilgrims from every part of the world and in every age have always striven to attain the higher forms of religious feeling and of civic fellowship.

Similar movements may be observed in India, Syria, and Mahommedan Turkey. In fact it is evident that contact with the West has had a disintegrating effect on the fabric of authority in the East beyond anything that has been produced in the West through the efforts of Neobuddhism and Theosophy.

In a different category stand those reforming enthusiasts who, starting from the outside, set to work to establish new religious institutions, in some cases preserving the link with national ecclesiastical traditions, in other cases passing over them entirely and building on the primitive traditions of the race. The former

[3] Cf. E. Buonaiuti, *Tipi di modernismo cristiano*, in "Ricerche Religiose," Rome, 1927, p. 359.

type may be found in the movements for the reconstitution of the Lutheran Church in Germany; the latter in the movement for an essentially German Christianity conforming to the racial characteristics. The former type may also be seen in China among the followers of Schwang-tze; the latter in the revolutionary movements of the young Chinese who throw over the old State religion.[4]

In India the Brahmo-somaj ("worshipers of God") have broken with the Indian traditions, both ancient and modern, and denying the authority of the *Vedas* approximate closely to Christianity, in the same way as Tagore and Ghandi, and still more Sundar Singh. The Brahmo-somaj, however, still wish to keep in contact with the old traditions of the race, and so follow to some extent those reforms in ceremonial law which were carried out by Debendra Nath Tagore, the father of the poet. Through these reforms this church has been placed in a similar position in the East to that occupied in the West by Liberal Christianity, which has undoubtedly the distinction of having become the most thoroughly modern of all forms of the Christian religion.

Meanwhile Sundar Singh and Ghandi, the former influenced mainly by religious objectives, the latter mainly by social, have started movements which tend in their applications of religion to forsake the traditions enshrined in the old forms of worship, in order to take up the laborious task of creative activity and to restore to the religious consciousness of the new East the position and scope which are its due.

In Japan, Buddhism, visited by a breath of new life, is looking for the reawakening of those who have left its ranks and is introducing reforms which are gradually bringing into the light again its early origin. Many plans are being worked out and many hopes entertained. The intention is to bring about a reform of Buddhism by freeing it from all the corruptions of

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[4] For a discussion of the modern religious and nationalist problems in China the reader should consult K. Fritz, *Christentum und nationale Strömungen in China*, Stuttgart, 1927.

superstition, bringing it back to its early origins and combining it with Shintoism, Confucianism and even Christianity.

All these reform movements of the East show the same unifying tendencies which are spreading to-day in Europe and America, with their various Theosophical, Neobuddhist and Anthroposophical societies. Their evident outcome is the creation of churches dedicated to the service of every religion, just as the Bahaists hope to gather into one great ocean all the streams of previous revelations, throwing aside once for all the religious traditions of their race, in order to effect a combination in which the contributions of the individual and of the nation would be no longer distinguishable.

These movements for unification evidently do not take account of the fact that, if the light of truth must, as the poet says, be revered from whatever lamp it comes and the voice of God be listened to, whoever gives it utterance, it is likewise true that all men are not equally disposed to see the light or to hear the voice. Therefore to deny the value of historic facts in the development of religion means to fail to recognize the great contribution made to the general growth of human religion by the individual and the nation and the illumination which they give to its particular applications in the world of phenomena.

In complete contrast to these unifying movements, which have already to some extent taken shape in certain institutions, such as the Bahaist Church in Persia, stand those other movements which call for a radical restoration of the ancient traditions of the race, modified, it is true, by modern civilization but kept clear from the smallest trace of recent religious and political traditions. I have alluded just now to the movement for the Germanic Church.[5] I might here add another—the so-called Young German and Young Dutch movements. But the *Deutschgläubige Glaubensgemeinschaft* is the most characteristic of those

[5] Raoul Patry, in his book on *La Religion dan l'Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, 1926, has described in a chapter called "Christian Paganism" these ultranational tendencies in their application to religion in contemporary Germany. Cf. also Ernest Seilliere, *Morales et Religions nouvelles en Allemagne*, Paris, 1927.

movements. Its membership is confined to those who are prepared to swear that they are of pure German blood, uncontaminated by Jewish blood or by color, and that they intend to keep it pure in their descendants; that they do not belong to any other religious community and that they whole-heartedly subscribe, with free and open consciences, to the German faith, which opens up to every believer access to "the eternal source of inspiration—the German Man." This community has already a special form of worship with hymns and prayers, feasts and ceremonies. It takes as its symbol the hammer, the instrument of the old German God Thor. It considers true art as synonymous with worship, and, leaping at one bound over the thousand years of Christian tradition, it seeks to link itself with the mythical traditions of the German people.[6]

Starting from a nationalistic basis, these movements aim at a national Renaissance such as the "Japan Federation of Religions" in the Far East, which is composed of national Christians, Shintoists and Buddhists. But they differ from it both in their methods and in their relations to the state, since they throw over all the most recent traditions and link themselves with an ethical religious culture which stretches far back into the mists of the mythical origin of the race.

There is no doubt that all these movements—whether they maintain a position inside existing religions and ecclesiastical institutions or break off and take up a detached position outside them—in all cases, except the movements toward unification, end with taking on to a greater or lesser extent a national complexion.

To counteract the differences and rivalries to which this might give rise, efforts have been made during the last few years to promote movements toward reunion. These, so far from trying to obtain a combination of different creeds and cults, tend toward

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[6] This is a prayer of the community addressed to the "Common Father." *Wir von deinem Blut geboren—Gott der Deutschen, nahen Dir; wir in fremden Volk verloren—Dich, Allvater, rufen wir.* Cf. also Karl Themel, *Der religiöse Gehalt der Völkischen Bewegung und ihre Stellung zur Kirche*, Berlin, 1926.

a friendly understanding, a union of religious and cultural aims, leaving each church free to develop not only its own doctrines, cults and canon law, but also all its own special characteristics.

Hence societies of laymen and ecclesiastics have in their meetings constantly been advocating and enforcing the necessity of examining with candor and earnestness those beliefs and cults in which the Christian churches are in contrast or divergence and, while respecting one another's religious convictions, have aimed at bringing about peace between nations and laying the foundations for a unity of Christendom that would realize the ideal set forth in the Lord's Prayer.

At first sight these movements may seem to take up different points of view, while seeking for a more secure foundation than that offered by the latest religious tradition. But in reality they have in common that great faith which is possessed by all religious movements that have left a more or less important mark upon history. And by faith is meant an inner life, as opposed to the life of formalism; an almost romantic longing to get back to the simple and the natural as opposed to a dry mechanism; the stress laid on feeling as compared with the intellect; the importance attached to native rather than acquired experience; a close relationship with the thought, art and feeling of the people, in order that each nation may be enabled to give its special contribution to the great work of world civilization.

At the present day religious thought seems more than ever to be engaged in a struggle that marks its painful development from one stage to another—from national differences engrafted in ecclesiastical institutions to their transformation into national churches and great international movements for unity; from a reign of religious and political intolerance to the formation of religious leagues between supporters of different creeds; from the rigidity of external traditional systems to the full life of an inner spiritual awakening; from the drowsy inertia of religious ordinances to the alert and conscious discipline of the conscience; from the degenerate formalism of an old ceremonialism to a craving for a return to sincerity, frankness and simplicity; from

dry and conventional technicalities to the direct inspiration of the Divine in art, nature and life. Everywhere this struggle is to be seen; but everywhere is the same strong desire to make clear and to define what is required for meeting the needs of the higher life of the soul, and to give greater reality and sincerity to religious thought and life.

The same thing holds good of prayer in the religious consciousness of to-day. This is a fact which should be gladly welcomed by all who are interested in the life of the spirit. I have at the beginning of this work mentioned some investigations that have been made into the nature of prayer and I have indicated the conclusions that might be drawn from them. But what contemporary prayer seems to demand is not, as has been alleged, new religious syntheses but an enrichment of its general framework and the imparting to it of as much reality as possible—a fact which ought to be taken as a sign of its growing appreciation.

There are, it is true, serious difficulties to be overcome in this field. Greater reality of thought in prayer must inevitably mean greater precision in bringing out points of contrast and especially the contradictions involved in all efforts to rationalize the irrational.

An objection of a very superficial character that is often brought forward against liberal Christianity is that there is a certain indefiniteness in the framework of its religious conceptions. But that only shows that men do not bear in mind that a certain indefiniteness is absolutely essential for any religious conception as affording the only intellectual atmosphere in which, at the present day, it can live and flourish. To require the contrary would argue an ignorance of the facts of religion and a return to the anthropomorphic conceptions of the primitive mind. This has been well pointed out recently by an earnest student of mediaeval religious thought, W. Whitaker, in what he says about the importance of concreteness in religious thought. Anyone who reads the present book can hardly fail to realize that the inadequateness of the human conception of the Divine

and of man's relations with it are an inevitable consequence of the irrational source from which that conception springs, and that any attempt, therefore, to tanslate religious experience into definite concepts must necessarily result in superficial or contradictory definitions.

It might be thought that the fundamental inconsistency between the divine objectivity or transcendental reality of the religious object and the religious consciousness of the subject is bound to make the problem of the reform of religious worship insoluble. But that should not prevent one from making all possible efforts to solve it, even if one can say *a priori* that the act of worship can never rise to the level of what the Divine Nature requires. The two must ever be separated by a gulf that no efforts can bridge.

It must be admitted that in this respect the prayer of to-day differs little from the prayer of long ago. It repeats, almost in the same terms, what, to the scientific mind, has always appeared illogical and contradictory. But it certainly differs in its greater consciousness of the utter inadequacy of every thought and act of man to express the Divine.[7] It is for this reason that contemporary religious thought tends to lay stress not so much on the ideas and the acts in which the feeling is embodied or on the words and gestures which endeavor to express in human language the relation of the subject to the religious object, but rather on the inner relationship which springs from religious experience and which gives prayer its reality.

Another question that arises is whether prayer is to be reduced to a common body of beliefs on which all the members of a religious community are required to agree and to definite teachings from which members are allowed to diverge or depart only in minor externals. But those who uphold this theory overlook the fact that no one can share the exact feelings of others in

[7] Cf. Robert Will. Le Culte, *Etude d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, Strasbourg, 1925; Rudolf Otto, *Zur Erneuerung und Ausgestaltung des Gottesdienstes*, Giessen, 1925; id., in *Das Jahr der Kirche in Lesungen und Gebeten*, Gotha, 1927.

religious worship any more than he can give perfect assent to every word of a speech.

Efforts after uniformity, if pursued to the bitter end, have only produced an outward and illusory appearance of unity. This may serve a useful purpose for a time in the practical life of the community, but it is almost always injurious to the integrity and free development of the religious values that are embodied in the consciousness of individuals.

While, therefore, the demand for greater concrete reality in religion should be actively encouraged, it should not be allowed to exercise a restraining effect on the individual. In aiming at unity of belief and ritual, we must not stifle the personal need and lose the personal touch. If this were to happen, unity, so far from bringing any real enrichment of religious thought and feeling, would end by impoverishing and sterilizing them. National tendencies in religion have thus sometimes proved disastrous. But if men can be brought to realize calmly the inestimable value of diversity not only in races and civilizations but also in individuals and the service which a nation, acting as a spiritual force, can render in building up an international system, a step will have been taken toward the development not only of the individual nation but also of the individual conscience. What will then be needed will be for the idiosyncrasies of the personal or national character to be combined with a broad spirit of charity and tolerance, that broad spirit which, far from being a sign of weakness, as some erroneously state, is rather a sign of an enlightened sense of power.

I will not stop to examine the other question which arises when this need for greater definiteness and correctness is merely met by a narrow and scrupulous observance of a set of identical rites for the whole religious population and by abandoning as a negligible item what is really much more important—the inner feeling. For it should be obvious, especially after what I have written about the magical and the religious phases of prayer, that, where there is no consciousness of the symbolic character of the rite as a means for religious edification, there is a serious

risk of reducing prayer to the level of the magic gesture or the cry of incantation.

Magic and eudaemonism and formalism are, in fact, the most serious dangers that prayer encounters during its long passage through history, unless we also include that which threatens it from a constant tendency to rationalize the irrational, and thus to express ideas and sensations in forms that are not suited to what is sacred but rather to that misrepresentation which is brought about by the vain attempt to depict and embody it under the limitations of a mental visualization. These dangers are not confined to one period of history but extend to every time and place. They are always at hand and ready to intervene wherever the conditions of thought or environment are favorable. The magic phase is, one may almost say, an inevitable one, when we reflect that the method by which words and gestures act is unknown to us (even when we fall back on a spurious explanation of their effect on social intercourse, and speak of so incomprehensible a thing as the "power of persuasion") and that we are often glad to take refuge in picturing their effect as a sort of occult and mysterious process.

The danger of formalism, of which I have already treated in the chapter on personal and institutional prayer, is continually kept alive, not only by the character of the religious institutions themselves (requiring, as they do, a uniform set of rules for everybody, which so long as all religious people are brought within their scope pay little heed to whether they are equally suitable for everyone's needs) but also by the saving of energy which each individual is likely by means of them to effect. Personal prayer, indeed, may be said to represent the exception rather than the rule. The mass of the people need a formula, a set prayer, which each one can then with comparatively little effort repeat and adopt for himself, instead of improvising a prayer of his own. A state of prayer is often induced in the masses by preaching, by the grandeur of sacred places, by religious ceremonies. The function of a set formula would merely be to quicken the state of prayer, that state by

means of which each one can in reality, and not merely in appearance, take part in collective prayer and in common worship. To discard these formative agencies, which can be discreetly used by the churches, means to be ignorant of the part which they can play in the development and the strengthening of personal prayer. Similarly to rest satisfied with a formal unity, created by souls which are religiously deaf to true worship, means to bring about the stereotyping of prayer in an empty and barren formalism.

The eudaemonistic attitude also certainly represents a grave danger for prayer in the religious consciousness of the day. But instead of seeking simply the entire elimination of this attitude, which would mean ignoring the individual differences in religious people, it is rather by aiming at overcoming the danger that accompanies it, like other dangers which threaten prayer, that we shall enhance prayer's value. To remove it entirely from all dangers would be equivalent to removing it from life, where it has its own function to fulfill.

Man, it has been rightly said, has not only a brain but also a heart. Hence an increase in reality in religious thought should go hand in hand with an increase of reality in religious feeling. And as a matter of fact contemporary Christian theology tends to make prayer an increasingly active and living force in the making of the religious life. The question of objective results, which traditionalism cannot bring itself to give up entirely and which answers to one of the most deep-seated convictions of the praying soul, passes over into the question of a divine gift which comes to the soul at the moment of sincere piety and religious devotion. Thus gradually but unmistakably the metaphysical question gives way to the psychological.

At this point, however, other questions of a psychological nature present themselves.

The Catholic Church, writes F. Heiler,[8] is strong and power-

[8] Cf. *Der Katholizismus, seine Idee und seine Erscheimung*, Munich, 1923; K. Adam, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Munich, 1925.

ful because it is strong and unceasing in its prayer. This is disputed by many evangelicals, who see in the multiplicity of sacred objects to which the Catholic directs his prayers a source of weakness.[9]

Nor have men hesitated to attack Catholic worship as empty formalism and Catholic prayer as mechanical and encased in formularies. No doubt such people are referring to the external side of worship, which, like institutional prayer in general, tends to become devoid of all religious value by withdrawing from the spirit at the center to the formal routine at the circumference. Catholicism has also been accused of a weakness due to the fact that it allows one man to take the place of another in prayer, going so far as to contemplate payment being made to a man who says a certain number of prayers in another's stead.

But even if the multiplicity of sacred objects to which prayer is directed breaks up the outward unity of the act, the inward unity remains as long as there is unity in the relationship of the worshiper with the Divine, under whatever form he may conceive it. In this connection some very instructive observations have been made by Gertrude Zezschwitz.[10] Soon after her conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism she gave a clear explanation of the mystical value attaching to sacred objects in Catholic worship, especially in connection with prayer, and described the laborious steps in the conscious transition from evangelical to Catholic worship, with all its accompaniment of saints, rosaries, prayers to the heart and wounds of Jesus, indulgences, prayers for the dead, etc.

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[9] A critical comparison between the Catholic and Protestant forms of worship has recently been made by Gustav Mensching, *Katholische Kultprobleme*, Gotha, 1927; cf. also Karl Heim, *Das Wesen des evangelischen Christentums*, Leipzig, 1926.

[10] Cf. *Warum Katholisch*, Freiburg, 1922; id. *Persönliches Erlebnis protestantischer und Katholischer Frömmigkeit*, 1925, quoted by Zänker, *Katholische und evangelische Frömmigkeit*, Berlin, 1926, which contains a chapter on Protestant prayer compared with Catholic; K. Reinhardt, *Mystik und Pietismus*, Munich, 1925; B. Poschmann, *Grundlagen und Geisthaltung der Katholischen Frömmigheit*, Munich, 1925.

The multiplicity of the sacred objects to which the prayers of Catholicism are directed might be of interest rather to the critics of its system of theology than of its system of prayer, since the latter is really concerned only with the religious feeling of the man who prays and the degree of influence which the multiplicity of religious objects is able to exercise over him. In fact the Catholic religion, though it runs the risk, as do more or less all other institutional religions, of cramping the religious life of the individual, calls upon its believers, not only for ceremonial prayer but also for individual and spontaneous prayer. The great strength of the Catholic religion consists in its offering its believers, whether they are simple folk with undeveloped minds or persons with a high degree of spirituality, a rich fountain of salvation. It is well known that the difficulties that are experienced in adapting the Catholic dogmas, training and worship to modern culture are mainly of a practical kind. But it should be noted that mechanical repetitions have in Catholicism quite a different significance from what they have in decadent forms of worship; because ceremonial prayer is not an act of magic but of merit. In other words, one is dealing with a verbal sacrifice, a sacrifice which, in the Catholic theology, ranks as a good work. The man who prays, being conscious that he is thus doing a good work, gives practical effect to it because of the ethical meaning that it has for him, even though he may not understand the words which he is pronouncing. But as it has been observed that a cramping of the religious life results from its shifting from its natural center (the spirit) to the circumference (external worship and ceremonies), people have been generally led to neglect not only the aesthetic and social value, but also the sacrificial value of prayer which is suggested by the rite, and therefore to condemn prayer too lightly and easily.

On the other hand concern for the realization of the aesthetic, mystical, educational and social value of prayer has led to some recent attempts to reform the liturgy with a view to making it more adapted to its high aims. In his acute observations with

regard to the spirit of the Catholic liturgy R. Guardini[11] has not failed to note the distinction arising from the objective and social value of worship on the one hand, and, on the other, its inner educational and personal value. Meanwhile the Benedictine abbot I. Herwegen lays stress on the mystical side of worship; while Rudolf Otto, one of the leading champions of the reform movement in the evangelical religion, would like this reform to go in the direction of eliminating its unfortunate bareness, so as to make the evangelical services more attractive, without, however, forgetting the fact that Protestantism is "the Church of the word." [12]

One may discover to-day, in regard to the form of worship in the two main branches of Christianity, an array of delicate questions, the roots of which go back into the field of theology; so that one is impressed with the need for their respective positions being set out with greater clearness and reality. Their differences are visible not only between Catholics and Protestants but also in the heart of the Catholic Church itself, where the Benedictines of Maria Laach and the Jesuits of Germany represent in some respects two different currents of thought.

With the former the fundamental idea of worship is "transformation." The liturgy must center in the exaltation of Christ, and lay its whole stress on the idea of mystery. The outstanding features are the transformation of man and the transformation of Jesus into Christ—in one case a release from evil, in the other the consummation of a mystery.

With the latter, the liturgy lays stress not so much on the mystical transformation as on the educative process. The liturgy, according to this conception (Guardini), is a man's self-expression of what he ought to be.[13]

The principal points of difference between Catholics and Protestants in the present-day movement for the reform of worship may be reduced to the conception of the natural, the con-

[11] Cf. *Vom Geist der Liturgie,* Mainz, 1921.
[12] Cf. *Zur Erneuerung und Ausgestalltung des Gottesdienstes,* Giessen, 1925.
[13] Cf. *Liturgische Bildung,* Mainz, 1925.

ception of the symbol and the value attached to personal and collective worship. The conception of the natural is closely associated with the value of the external act and of worship. Postscholastic thought had, as is well known, originally laid stress on the "meritorious" character of the Mass and had included the external act within the category of merit. The analogy afforded by the coexistence of the soul and the body readily gave theologians an explanation for the internal movements (*oratio*) becoming external manifestations (*adoratio*). But that soon led directly to regarding the external acts as inseparable from worship.[14] The sacred act was then described in its specific unmistakable characteristics as compared with the profane act. The Divine, the supernatural was seen standing out above the natural; but the latter ceased to be regarded as a purely subjective act and appeared to be inspired by a divine energy.

In evangelical quarters the boundaries between the sacred and the profane are not so clearly marked, although here too while the natural is the condition and guarantee of worship, the supernatural is its very essence. In baptism indeed (which is the transition to a new life) the Church is not satisfied with an inner experience or with sacred words alone. It adds water, as a concrete object which guarantees the objective realization of grace. Theology, accordingly, defines the sacrament as a sign of what it actually does: *signum efficax*.

From this interconnection of the natural with the supernatural, of the symbol with the reality which it represents, it may be concluded that every sacred act, every symbol, embodies a sacred reality and therefore is not a mere sign, as liberal theologians suppose. They look upon the symbol and the religious object as being two realities on quite different planes, the religious reality never residing in the symbol and no given symbol being necessary to represent a given religious object. The realistic conception, on the other hand, sees in the symbol something necessary for the object, while the latter cannot be reached ex-

[14] Cf. Birnbaum, *De Katholische liturgische Bewegung*, Güterslob, 1926.

cept through means of "its own" symbol, the two together forming a whole, a single reality.

It might here be objected that such a fusion of symbol and object savors of magic. To escape from this difficulty one may recall an idea that meets it halfway: *"Sicut autem verbum incurrit in aures, ut feriat corda: ita ritus ipse incurrit in oculos, ut moveat corda: Idem effectus est verbi et ritus."* (As the word enters in at the ears, to reach the heart, so, to touch the heart, the rite enters in at the eyes. The effect of word and rite is the same.) This is a halfway position which liberal theology might accept if it meant simply that religious experience, being what it is, must credit the symbol with some real psychological value. Liberal theology might, however, accept the implied denial of anything of an absolute or eternal character in the symbol. It ought in fact to accept it so as not to open the door to the innumerable difficulties which, apart from all ontological considerations, arise from what historical religious research tells us of the transference of ritual forms from one religion to another with changed meaning. Liberal theology does not refuse to credit the symbol with any religious value at all, but, bearing in mind the irrational element in the Divine, it declines to recognize any material conditions which would enable the realistic concept of the symbol to shut off and limit the Absolute.[15] This theology refuses to imprison the Divine Being in the past or to relegate Him to inaccessible regions. It does not regard worship as a servile act or holiness as a physical condition or prayer as a retrospective adoration. But it does not entirely forget that when it removes worship into a purely natural setting it must not divest prayer from every kind of external action, and so deny in the case of religion that correspondence between gesture and emotion which is readily conceded when gestures are associated with emotions outside the domain of religion. In

[15] Cf. Gustave Mensching, *Katholische Kultprobleme*, Gotha, 1927; Frick, *Der Katholische-protestantische Zwiespalt*, in "Kairos," Darmstadt, 1926; See also the acute observations of James Martineau, (written before the movement for the reform of worship had arisen): *Christianity without priest and without ritual* in "Studies of Christianity," London, IX. edition, 1900.

conclusion, while one rightly refuses to accord to the symbol or the gesture or the mystery complete and effective reality, one is at the same time far from wishing to fix an impassable gulf between the natural sphere and the supernatural—a gulf which would merely isolate the latter entirely from the sound of human prayer.

But just as gesture is associated with speech, so the symbol is associated with the sacred object and reveals it without thereby transcending its own ephemeral existence. Such a revelation is not a part of the Divine Existence but merely one of the signs, one of the languages, in which it makes itself accessible, under limited conditions, to a limited and contingent world. For if it were true that the symbol and the object of revelation formed a single whole, the Divine Existence itself would be inexorably confined within the limits of the symbol; and thus the symbol, so far from being, like the expression of the face, a sign of the spirit within, would be nothing less than the spirit itself, enclosed, in all its reality, within the vague and feeble image of the Infinite.

Another outstanding subject of controversy, in addition to the concept of the "natural" and the "symbol," is that of the individual and collective character of religion and therefore of prayer. Here some of the phases that we have previously examined in the historical development of the religious activity, such as the creative and the conservative phase, come into marked contrast. While the latter is more emphasized by the Catholics, the Protestants tend to give a more definite and concrete meaning to the personal and creative phase of the religious life.

Romano Guardini,[16] who on this point does not differ from the ritual tendencies of the Benedictines but assigns a predominantly educative value to ritual, lays it down that in prayer each one should try to expand his own Ego, getting rid of his sub-

[16] Cf. *Liturgische Bildung*, Mainz, 1925.

jectivity in order to place himself within the great community of the Church. Such prayer, which at the present day tends to center itself on the mystical unhistoric doctrine of the kingship of Christ,[17] lays stress upon the concept of the Church as the unity of the many. I. Herwegen makes it clear that when he speaks of the liturgy as the prayer of the Church he means the prayer of its whole mystical personality and of each member according to the functions which he fulfills in that mystical body. The diversity of functions of liturgical prayer is arranged in accordance with the hierarchical grades of the diverse members of the Church, from the highest ecclesiastic down to the layman. This conception of the prayer of the Church hinges on a religious community conceived as a metaphysical grouping and outside the range of history—a metaphysical grouping which practically contains the elements of what constitutes the faith of the individual units.

Such a conception is repugnant to individualism, which is in its constant struggle to realize itself and in its appeal to the history and psychology of religion, attaches value to the religious community only when it is definitely established (as happens at the call of some heaven-sent prophet) and then only in order to gain through it a fresh supply of those forces which had been obscure and weak in the individual and so to reach a higher form of religious life. The traditional teaching of the Church (the mystical body of Christ) maintains the objective presence of Christ and His life-giving entrance into the dark reality of the world, a consummation which cannot be obtained by means of simple individuals, even though they are *homines religiosi*, but solely by means of the religious community or rather the Church. Individualism, on the other hand, maintains that this is to remove from its proper field a problem which, instead of straying amid the luxurious growths of metaphysics, ought to

[17] Cf. I. Herwegen, *Alte Quellen neuer Kraft*, Düsseldorf, 1920; Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, *La regalità di Cristo*, Reports, proceedings and resolutions of the first National Congress on the Kingship of Jesus Christ, Milan, 1926; Bernard Bartmann, *Jesus Christus unser Heiland und König*, Paderborn, 1926.

be confined within the clear and definite limits of historical and psychological research into the facts of religion.

The determination to sweep away every vestige of individualism or subjectivism in the Church was carried to the length of denying the possibility of individuals, taken singly, conveying to others the Divine Spirit or even of communicating directly with the Divine, though they might be endowed with gifts of grace. This meant taking away from prayer not only all metaphysical meaning but also all psychological meaning, since for psychology the power of communication must be a reality. Against this position, as I have pointed out above, it would be a wiser course to remember that the individual and the community taken in themselves, are merely abstractions; since it is not possible to understand the life of the spirit if one tries to find it in either the individual or the community separately, but only in both together conjointly.

In these discussions, which take rise from the present-day movement for the reform of the liturgy, those who take an exclusively theological point of view are apt to forget that prayer, being a universal fact, a frame of mind that religious consciousness is unable to dispense with, cannot be understood if confined within the bounds of a single church. It is sufficient to state the problem in this way to see that the liturgy and the religious ritual which accompanies prayer can be nothing but the visible embodiment of the psychological and historical conditions in which it arises and develops and are therefore as inevitable as the gestures which accompany speech. Instead of raising the question whether the Catholic Church ought to prune her liturgy or the Protestant Church to embellish hers, the problem ought to be reduced to making the cult, the words, the gestures, the religious ritual, the sacred art better adapted for developing and strengthening the religious emotions, more capable of giving completeness and expression to the emotion of prayer. This is why Rudolf Otto, in his projected reform, has not hesitated to bring together all that he thought best suited for attaining this end, not excluding even the silent prayer of George Fox.[18] The

Orthodox Eastern Church owes much to the richness of its liturgy; and Swedish Lutheranism has preferred to keep the sacred vestments and the music of the Catholic Mass, which other churches have done away with. But in any case common worship ought to be given a position which would be both of a permanent character and also elastic enough to allow religious ideas and feelings to have freer scope.

A problem which is a very important one for the religious thought of to-day is that to which I have alluded at the beginning of this work—the object of prayer. From the day when philosophic thought first turned its attention to the facts of religion this problem has appeared to arise inevitably, and frequently men have thought to solve it by denying the rationality of the act of prayer. Starting as it did from the rationality of the religious object and therefore of the actual fact of religion, philosophic thought could not but arrive at this negation. It may be remembered that Origen said, "If all happens according to the Will of God, and if His desires are fixed, prayer has no meaning." But generally even those philosophers who ought, according to their doctrines, to condemn prayer as irrational, cannot bring themselves to do so. The reason for this must be sought in another direction. Many, even to-day, adopt an attitude of uncertainty, like Maximus of Tyre and Clement of Alexandria, and observe religious rites as Socrates, Seneca and Epictetus did. Diderot himself concludes his *Interprétation de la Nature* with a prayer, in which, while professing to know nothing of God and declaring that he does not know whether he himself is virtuous through natural disposition or through free choice, he yet prays because he wishes to be at rest about his future destiny, because he wishes to love truth and virtue. He prays as if God existed for him and he himself were one of His creatures.

Such are the inevitable contradictions which beset those who try to give a rational explanation of the mystery which enshrouds

[18] Cf. R. Otto, *Aufsätze das Numinose betreffend*, Gotha, 1923; id. *Zur Erneuerung und Ausgestaltung des Gottesdienstes*, Giessen, 1925; R. Otto, G. Mensching, R. Wallau, *Liturgische Blätter*, Gotha, 1926-7.

the soul that prays, and which answers to deep and living wants. Men have tried in vain to get rid of these contradictions either by condemning prayer as a superstitious action or by trying to make explanations which would justify it by its objective results, or lastly, by reducing it to a mere attitude of mind without any content.[19]

But in reality prayer, as F. Menégoz[20] has well seen, is incomprehensible and at the same time indispensable. The philosopher, not being able to place it within the framework of his rational system, is bound to condemn it; yet he continues to pray, not only through habit and training but also (which is far more important) because of a spontaneous impulse of his mind. Those who pray are not faced with the problem of prayer, because for them it is already solved in the act of prayer itself.

To reduce prayer to one of its phases or one of its substitutes (Dorner and Guyau wished to reduce it to mere contemplation) does not solve but simply complicates the question. For not only is such reduction at variance with the fact that prayer is not confined to any one of its phases, but it also fails to give an explanation of it, since it puts in the place of prayer something equally mysterious, viz. one of its substitutes or one of its phases. In any case prayer, which refuses to be abolished by a philosophical pronouncement, will certainly refuse to be replaced by ritual and liturgical formularies or a series of states of mind. "No rites, no magic formulae," writes Heiler, "have been able to stifle it; no philosophical criticism will be able to destroy it. For life, with its irrational impulse, always proves itself far stronger than thought with its legal deductions. And it is precisely this irresistible impulse which creates the inner need for prayer."[21]

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[19] *La prière* says J. Segond (op. cit.), *prise en son essence, est une activité qui se réalise en ses formes diverses, qui se constitue en attitudes a l'égard de tel ou tel contenu, ou simplement en attitude sans contenu intellectuel.*

[20] Cf. *Das Gebetsproblem in Anschluss an Schleiermachers Predigten und Glaubenslehre, neugestellt und intersucht*, Leipzig, 1911.

[21] Examples of the natural craving for prayer, taken from ancient and contemporary history, may be found in H. E. Fosdick's *The Meaning of Prayer*, New York, 1925.

But without going into these arguments what I have already said will be sufficient to show that the problem of prayer assumes for the spirit of modern times a very different form from that which confined it to objective results. To-day prayer finds its significance mainly in the part which it plays in the development of the life of the spirit and in the ends to which that life is directed. That is why the problem which it presents is not only of ecclesiastical but also of general interest, since the need for prayer extends to the whole range of all the religions of mankind.

Another problem with which the religious thought of to-day is faced relates to the different degrees of value in prayer. We ought however to realize once for all that prayer, as it passes from aims that are predominantly egoistic, anti-social and eudaemonistic to aims that have an aesthetic quality, as it steeps itself more and more in the light which comes from the ordered arrangement of knowledge, as it rises to a fuller conception of the Divine and of the principles which flow from it, as it opens its eyes to the vision of goodness and reaches out to bring blessings upon others so as to include within its embrace all living creatures, acquires an increasing value while it gradually proceeds in its ascent toward the realization of a world in which spiritual interests are supreme.

From the remotest days up to our own time, from the lowest to the highest stages of civilization, as prayer struggles on between a phase of creation, spontaneity and liberty and a phase of conservatism, its value changes from time to time in correspondence with the successive changes in its manifestation. But in this unavoidable struggle prayer attains to the highest expression of man's religious life and to its own completest realization, with a due blending of the claims of tradition with those claims of freedom and sincerity which are so necessary an ingredient in all religious acts, and thus takes its place as an ethical influence in and for life. Instead of invocation, petition, thanksgiving or adoration it becomes, as we have seen, through a

heroic act of redemption, a powerful instrument for gaining release from all selfish and material contamination.

This increase in the ethical character of prayer, which is demanded by the religious life of to-day, goes side by side with its liberation from those barren psycho-technics which sometimes threaten to deprive it of its social value and thus to divert it from its proper human aim, which is not to escape from life but to raise and exalt it.

The vital impulse for liberation, the earnest aspiration for salvation or redemption, is a constant element in prayer. But the salvation that is now looked for is an internal and not an external one; for no one can be master of anything unless he is master of his own will and his own character. "Pray," said Cromwell to his soldiers, "but keep your powder dry." "Pray," said Bayard Taylor, "but work also." But never, perhaps, in the whole history of prayer has its activist character been so emphasized as in the religious life of to-day. Quitting the foolish renunciation of all will power and the sinking of the human consciousness in the great void of universal consciousness, the prayer of to-day finds its real meaning and value, not in withdrawing from that reality of the world and of life in which it moves and works, but in looking to the fresh living springs of its own nature for the inner sense of its working—which means rediscovering its own value and having the opportunity for increasing it. For it is only in this way that it can give to man as experience what he would be unable to realize as knowledge, and, throwing itself open to the light that shines above it, can enable the spirit to reach untold heights in the vision of absolute values, there to gain inspiration for the will and the understanding and ineffable blessedness for the quiet depths of the heart. For without definitely making the strengthening of the spirit its object prayer actually achieves this, because it goes beyond the blessings for which man primarily prays; and it is through becoming an increasingly effective instrument (and indeed the very process) of moral elevation, through its yearning vision of righteousness, that it is able to inspire the religious ideas of a Michelangelo

and a Beethoven, of a Reinick and a Geibel, a Lope de Vega and an S. F. Adams, and to form the groundwork of all their highest activities.

The Pythagoreans used to say that man can become better in three ways, but particularly by holding converse with the gods. So too modern psychology has endorsed the educative value of prayer to which reference is here made. This is indeed the most fertile field in which it works. The spirit which realizes best its own God-given purpose is the spirit which has best listened to the ineffable voice of the Divine.

This richer conception of prayer enables it to convert passivity into action. When prayer can recall a man to his duty, can give him new strength to accomplish it, can encourage him to work and not despair, and can comfort him in grief, it is certainly a source of power capable of transforming not only the inner life but also all the vast network of social relations. Religion, which to-day is no longer regarded as divorced from economic, cultural and political life, but rather as the groundwork of all human activity, tends by its own nature to embrace all human institutions. But it ought not for that reason to overwhelm or absorb them; otherwise either it or they will deteriorate. It ought rather to raise them to an ethical level, in which the life of the individual and of the community, together with the institutions and civilizations under which they live, are seen as the realization of the Divine in history. Then will prayer too be revealed as an even clearer witness to the presence of the Divine in the world.

The philosophic thought of the day sees with increasing clearness that it is not by escaping from evil, but by conquering it, not by withdrawing from the world as from the kingdom of Satan, but by striving in it for what religions describe as the kingdom of God, that the will is trained, the character is formed and a power is developed which enables man to set before himself and to realize a greater fullness of life, a higher plane of existence.

Modern philosophic research has also come to the conclusion

that the worship of eternal things and the realization of life in the Divine ought to be enlightened by a fuller knowledge of the human *psyche*, and that a closer examination ought therefore to be given not only to the actual process of prayer but also to its motives and what it can do for man in opening out to him a rational view of the universe and of the relations between the human and the divine spirit in human life. If prejudices and errors, survivals and confusions still linger on, they must be eliminated. This is also the dream of all those who are actually working for the realization of a more developed and advanced society; the dream of the great mass of intellectual workers who are patiently preparing the path for the morrow, often in spite of the fierce recrudescence of the crabbed intolerance of traditionalism.

The religious life of to-day seems to be setting its face toward the gleaming path that has been opened up by these workers and to be praying for the dawn of a renewed humanity, which means that each one should prepare the way for it in himself and help others to prepare the way for it the whole world over. If man does not always gain release from those blind instincts which made him too often prefer material to spiritual power, still it is in working for this release that the miracle of prayer is in our day accomplished and that the brightest light is thrown upon his future. If the religious life can, for this stern task, succeed in combining all that is most precious in tradition with the untaught promptings of the heart, it will have risen a step higher in the religious life and will be approaching still nearer to that close contact with the Divine which was not unknown to the great religious geniuses.

And there are signs that this is already happening. The need for a wider, freer, more life-giving flood of light upon the spirit is making itself felt both in the East and in the West even in places where darkness has for centuries been oppressing and stifling men's consciences. If the better path is not always taken, yet the dawning of a better Humanity stirs the soul like a Messianic hope. The formation of ideals awakens the desire to

realize them; the prayer for their realization is therefore in itself a great step forward. For a man to awake to a sense of what is good, to set before himself spiritual ends, is to put himself, as Lecky says, in a state of mind that is specially favorable for prayer; because faith that involves prayer is in itself a reflection of its fulfillment, as the picture is a reflection of reality.

Thus it is that the sting of pain and the wounds of a misspent life may sometimes yield the life-giving blood which feeds the craving for freedom and for light, the thirst for that infinite ideal which was latent all the time beneath the conscious self and which now rises up, like a track of light, marking the path to be followed.

As that ideal dawns upon a world which has lost the consciousness of its mission unsuspected forces arise within it, now feebly and wearily, like frail quivering lights struck by a tired unseen hand in a starless night, now in a sudden burst which clears away the thick layers of mist and opens up wider vistas for civilization. The religious life of to-day is finding once more the way out of a barren desert in which it seemed to be pining away, and its prayer gives glimpses of a yearning vision for justice and love. As one listens to that prayer it seems as though a new soul were arising with a faith that has power to prepare the way for the future, and were marching confidently forward, knowing that from the valley of this world and its griefs the road stretches that leads upwards to the topmost heights. If praying means creating and maintaining in the heart those high desires which enable man to live apart from wickedness and from all that estranges from the life of the spirit; if praying means a full consciousness of his own nature and his own destiny, a mounting up, an ineffable fusion of the human life in the Divine—then there should be no doubt that the metaphysical problem of prayer finds its full solution in that moral action which, while seeking to make the human will one with the Divine, also asks that it may, as reason bids, be made one with the laws of nature.

It is such prayer that may mark a fresh starting point in human

history. History is, according to Nietzsche, the progress of man toward power; according to Italian Neo-Hegelianism it is the progress of man toward liberty. But history is something richer and fuller than either. It is above all else a gradual development of the human consciousness as it passes from the exercise of power and of liberty to the realm of those moral values from which life attains to its greatest fullness in the harmony of the universe. In such a vision of history prayer can to-day be seen scattering from its beneficent hand seeds that bear within them the promise of a nobler Humanity.

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